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 pages of SHADIS.)

This policy actually penalizes **AEG** for being
 associated with **SHADIS** rather than having an
 unfair advantage over other companies. We hope
 this policy demonstrates our determination to
 keep **SHADIS** truly independent. □



"Badgers? We don't need no stinking Badgers."

You know, when you find yourself on a lonely stretch of highway in the middle of the Painted Desert, eighty miles from the next McDonalds, any subject of conversation is fair game.

Thus on our recent convention tour, my partner John and I found ourselves discussing an interesting hypothesis. We had just finished listening to Neil Young's "Searching for a Heart of Gold" on the radio and one of us had commented that a creative GM could take that song, put a twist on it and base an entire campaign around it.

Images came to mind of an old man sitting in a tavern telling a group of player characters of his life long search for the 'heart of gold'. The players would assume the old man was literally speaking of gold and had been searching for the mother lode - at the end of the adventure they would learn the 'heart of gold' was actually an ancient dragon living in the mountains.

That got us thinking about what other songs could be used as a basic plot for an adventure. Eventually we turned toward movies and TV shows.

They say there is nothing new under the sun and that you can boil down any book or movie ever written to a basic dozen or so plot lines. When you think of it in that context - the GM can quickly

Cries From the Attic

Editorial of a Madman

come up with an adventure at the drop of a hat.

Just pick a movie, change the villains and setting and 'presto' you've got an adventure.

For example, take the **Dirty Dozen**. Great war flick but not really useable in a fantasy campaign, right? Think again. Simply change the Nazis to Orcs. Instead of U.S. soldiers being recruited from a military prison how about a group of mercenaries being taken from a King's dungeon? The mission is basically the same, to assassinate a group of the King's enemy in a far away kingdom.

After experimenting with this approach I'm of the opinion that any western ever made can be adapted to an FRPG with minimal effort on the GM's part. The cowboy becomes a knight or ranger and the Indians become elves, orcs, barbarians - what have you (no disrespect to native americans intended).

During our trip we came up with a dozen or so movies that we felt were ideal for the GM to twist into adventures.

Treasure of the Sierra Madre. This movie would need very little modification. The GM would have to throw in some well developed NPCs to covet the players' gold and build the tension but you pretty much have a made-to-order adventure here.

Lonesome Dove. Huh? No really, this mini-series would make an excellent campaign. The GM would end up with a group of aging, semi-retired adventurers driving a caravan into orc territories where they hope to carve out their own kingdom.

Alien. This one is easy. The space ship becomes a castle and the alien pretty much remains his nasty old self and has taken to hiding in secret corridors and chimney flumes from which he emerges and attacks the residents of the castle. The

party is called into exorcise the beast without destroying the castle in the process.

Tombstone. Again, a simple one to convert. The player characters are hired by the mayor of a small town to clean things up and to chase out a group of thieves who have been holding the town hostage. The adventure would build up to a final showdown.

Hogan's Heroes. This TV show has some interesting potential as a campaign setting. The twist on this one is that the players are a group of thieves who are operating from within a prison in a large walled city. Through tunnels and sewers they come and go as they please - robbing the local citizens and then returning to their cells. The local constable is baffled and unable to solve the rash of robberies in his city.

The Great Escape. (sigh) This movie is one of my all time favorites. This one would take a little more work on the GM's part but I think it could result in a top notch adventure. But how do you capture the grandeur of a dare-devil Steve McQueen on a motorcycle? Hey, that's your problem, not mine.

Once you start to look toward movies as potential adventures for your own campaign, chances are you'll never be at a loss for ideas again.

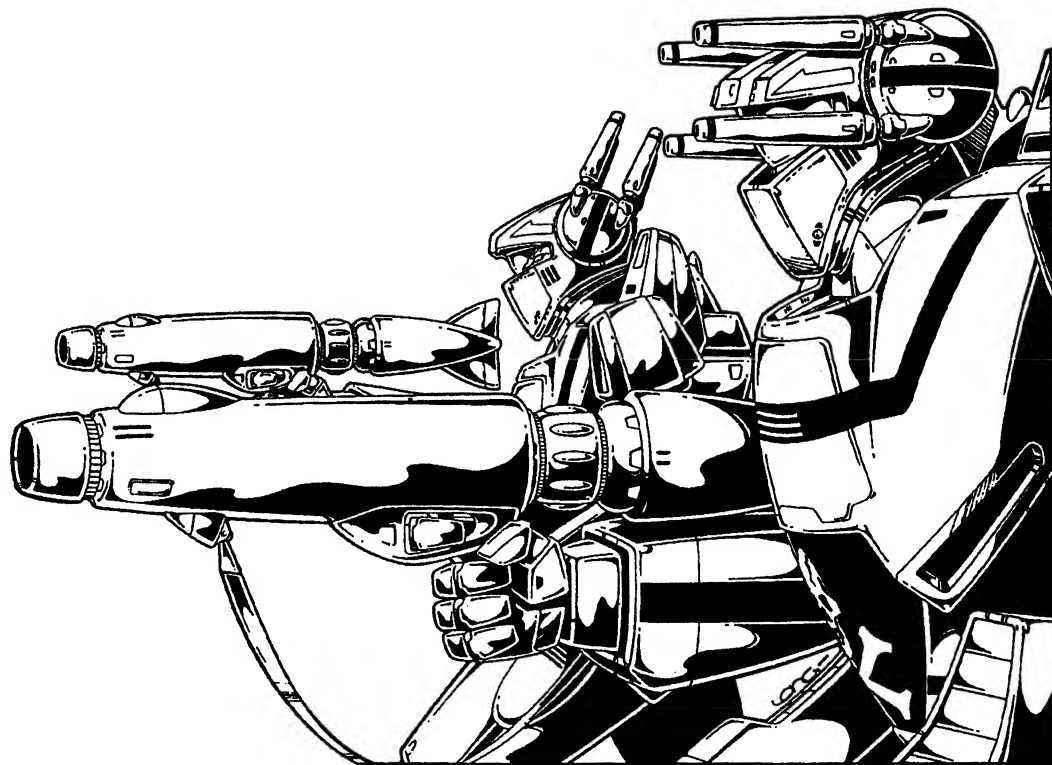
The trick of course, is not to divulge to your players what movie your adventure is based on. If they figure it out on their own, that's great - but there's no point in giving them an edge. I've found that such adventures take on a life of their own once the players become involved and end up with little resemblance to their original inspiration.

Enjoy the issue! As always, your comments and suggestions are appreciated.

Jolly R. Blackburn

Jolly R. Blackburn
October 20, 1994

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Mail Bag

Our Readers Talk Back

Greetings Dear Readers,

Due to space considerations, some letters have been edited.

The mail just doesn't seem to stop. Oh dear. We read each and every letter, so even if it isn't printed, your comments are welcome and your suggestions and constructive criticisms are thoughtfully considered. So keep the letters coming. Remember SHADIS is an interactive magazine - we want you, the reader, to be involved.

Gameweaver

Dear SHADIS,

Thank you for the samples of SHADIS magazine that I received.

You might be interested in knowing that **Knights of the Dinner Table** has quickly become a hit in Israel. Despite your request for no more 'atta boy' letters, allow me to congratulate you on a well-written and a well edited magazine.

Yosi Gurvitz
Petah-Tikva, Israel

Dear SHADIS,

Wow!! What else can I say about this new (for me anyway) magazine. I'm thoroughly impressed. I'm sorry to say that I only bought the magazine for the list of **Legend** cards.

I then immediately went home to check off the cards that I have, and deemed it a fair purchase. Sorry to say, I put SHADIS aside.

I told a friend of mine about the magazine and took him to buy a copy at the book store (pretty nice I think, seeing as I could have photo copied that list for him, but my motto is "I paid, he pays").

I then saw the great gifts that you include with a subscription and thought what the hay? You seem to cover **Magic** fairly frequently and I'd probably end up buying your magazine anyway.

Besides, my friend actually read your magazine and said it was a 'damn good magazine'. So I sent off my check. One week later (yesterday) I finished the fantasy book I was currently reading and found myself with nothing to read. I brought the magazine to work to occupy myself during break and lunch. I took a fifteen minute break and started flipping through the magazine. Suffice it to say I found some really interesting articles: I mean I do play a number of RPGs and have been GMing for about twelve years.

Well, thirty minutes later a co-worker came into the back room and asked if I was taking a break or lunch. I got totally caught up in the magazine and lost all track of time. I feel ashamed that I only gauged the value of this fine magazine on the amount of Magic stuff I could find within its covers (please forgive me).

The jist of this letter (which I write immediately, on my lunch break) is that Magic got me to buy my first issue, and enticed me to subscribe but it was your excellent work and quality that will keep me as a reader and advocate to all my friends of this fine magazine called SHADIS.

Your new avid reader

Patrick Griffin

Dear SHADIS,

I love everything about your magazine but I had to comment on my favorite feature. I think the **Gamemaster's Workshop** series is truly the best thing I've seen come out of a games magazine in over a decade.

What a concept! Because of SHADIS I now have something else to drag to my gaming sessions - all my back issues of SHADIS!

The generic articles are a god-send. Random encounter tables, new NPCs and monsters, adventure hooks, maps and interesting articles

making my campaigns more enjoyable and thought provoking.

Just keep doing what you are doing - when word gets out about your wonderful magazine you'll be beating readers away with a stick.

I love the little guy in the **Gamemaster's Workshop** logo too. It makes it easier to find my favorite articles.

Jason Phillips
Flint, MI

Dear SHADIS,

Well I got issue 15 today. Looks good and I only have one complaint. The magazine is just too big. I mean it takes me so much longer to read your mag than it does those "other" mags. Jeez have some consideration and print a shorter magazine.

Okay enough with that. I really like the issue. The Zeleznik cover is awesome. I really enjoyed the **Cyberpsychosis** article. The



You'll find the distinctive 'Game Master's Workshop' logo throughout SHADIS. The logo identifies articles and columns that are generic and designed to aid the GM.

CLERK's article and the police article are really cool too. **Bits and Pieces** is also a fave of mine-give Mark Arsenaault a biscuit for me. And as always the **Knights of the Dinner Table** rules.

Joe Genero and **Fineous** also rank high on my list. The "Henchman staff" cartoon eluded me though.....

Keep up the great work.

Alexander Chavira
Email/AOL

Dear SHADIS,

I write you, because I think that your magazine is one of the best role-playing magazines on the international scene. Excellent work!

To introduce myself, I'm a German student and have been a role-player for ten years. I have a lot of experience with Fandom-projects like the organization of conventions, publishing a convention calendar and so on.

At the moment I am working on a new project: to publish a German independent role-playing magazine and I tell you, it's really hard work!

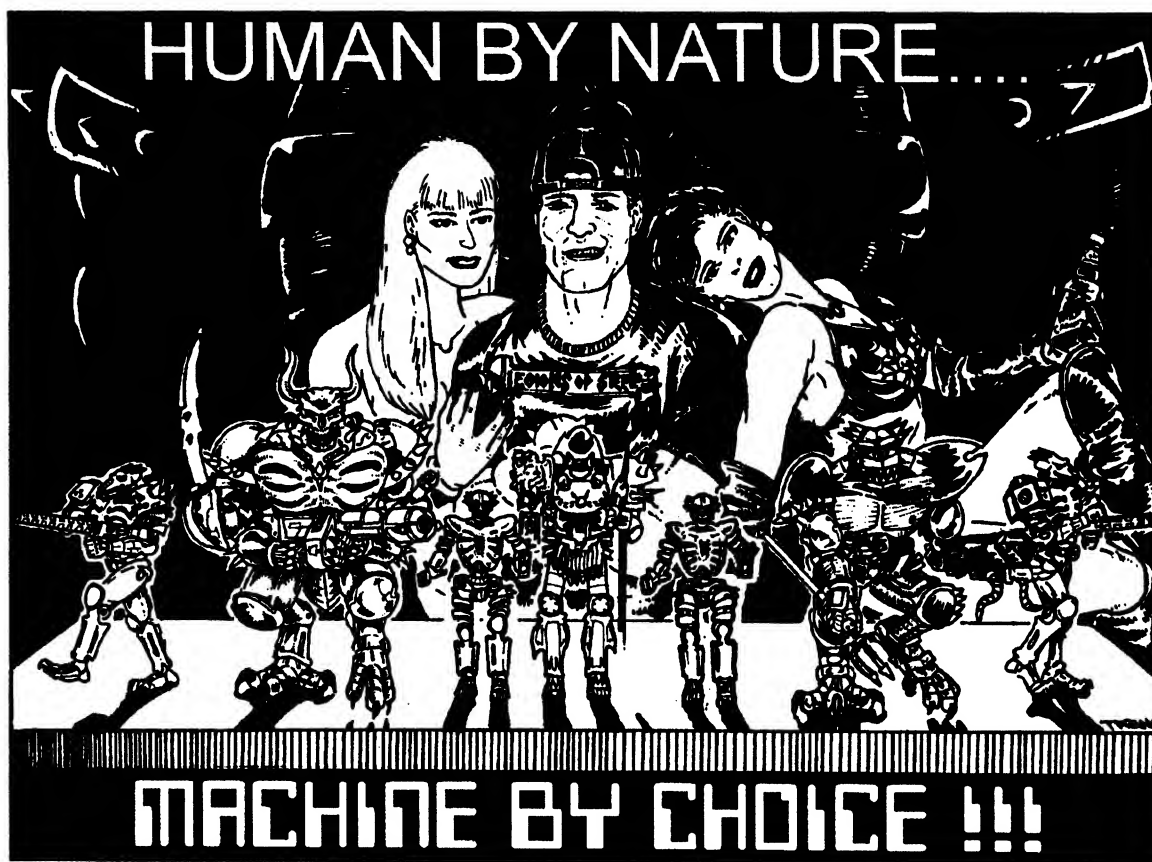
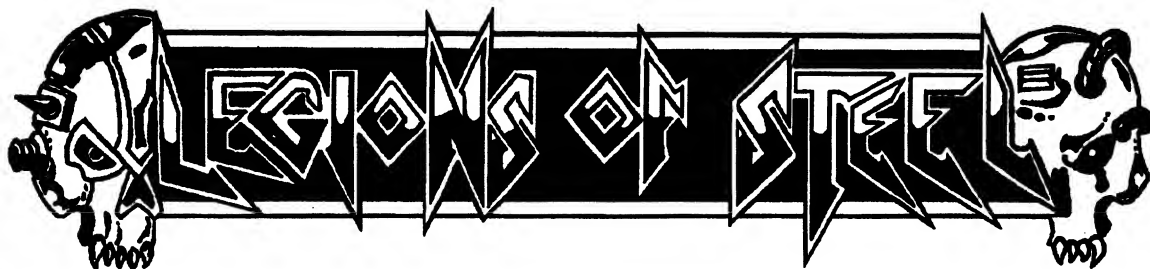
My motivation is that there are no good role-playing magazines in the German language.

That's a situation I am determined to change and I am inspired by the success of SHADIS.

It's easy, of course to set a goal, it's another to actually make it happen. In the real world there are many obstacles and one sorrow of mine is that it is extremely difficult to get good articles.

Do you think it's possible to get or buy the rights of translation to some of your articles? I don't think I can get enough well written articles in German to support my magazine.

Also, if you don't mind, can you offer any advice or tips for publishing a magazine? At the moment I am shocked about all the work and



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-Dragon Magazine five star review, July 1993



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money it takes to produce a good magazine.

Even so, I've taken the first steps and hope to have my first issue out next year. I would be very grateful if I could get a positive answer from you and I wish you good luck on your own magazine.

Walter Zink
Siemenstr.9
89331 Burgau, Germany

We wish you the best of luck, Walter. Unfortunately, except for certain pieces, SHADIS only purchases first time rights for articles. That means, of course, that you would have to work out terms with each respective author or artist for the material you are interested in. If you would care to write, in care of SHADIS, and let me know which articles you want, I will forward your letter to the appropriate person.

I am making an exception and listing your address in case any of our readers want to answer your call to arms. How about it guys? If

you think you can help Walter, why not drop him a note?

JRB

Dear SHADIS,

About one issue ago, I was in my favorite game store, just watching over the local Magic fanatics as they swapped rare and uncommon cards. I pondered over whether or not I should try trading with them, but then decided against it.

You see, I have a relatively meager collection of only a few hundred cards, and I was not really sure which cards I had were the most prized or valuable.

Instead, I asked the lady at the games store if there was a supplement or something on the market that she could recommend. She immediately directed me to buy a copy of issue #13 of SHADIS.

Well, to make a long story short, I fell in love with the magazine, Magic card list notwithstanding. The impression the magazine left me with was that of sitting around the table with a group of fellow gamers, just chatting away and sharing ideas. Other magazines these days seem more preoccupied trying to sell their

campaign worlds to gamers, going into great detail over this campaign supplement or that boxed setting or a book that explains it all. They seem to have forgotten that it is not the campaign that is important to role-players; it's the adventure. SHADIS, to me, is a magazine for adventurers as opposed to campaigners.

Keep up the good work!

Bryan J. Coyle
Portland, OR

Dear SHADIS,

I'll be damned! It looks like you may be the first independent games magazine that may actually survive.

That's quite an accomplishment in itself.

I can remember a conversation I had with a half dozen very well-known industry insiders last year at GenCon. The general opinion was that an independent magazine just couldn't survive in this industry. We cited lack of advertising, lack of interest and financial woes as a few of the reasons why such a creature just couldn't survive, let alone flourish.

So you'll forgive us if we've all been scratching our heads these past months, wondering why SHADIS seems to be going places even the major house-organs never dreamed of venturing.

I'm sure your competitors would be inclined to attribute your success to good timing or just plain luck. Of course they are wrong. I have studied your magazine these past months and I'm on to your little secret.

You put out a hell of a magazine and you give the readers what they want. Now why didn't anyone else in this industry think of that? What a concept!

I warn you, Mr. Blackburn — if you turn SHADIS into another glorified house organ your readers will rebel and you will most likely have to flee the country.

Keep a steady hand on the tiller and follow that same elusive star you've been chasing these past months. Do that and I'll gladly join you on your journey.

Bill Gallegos
Email/AOL

□

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CORRECTION NOTICE

Last issue, the wrong advertisement appeared in SHADIS magazine. *Hero League* and *Unearthly Knowledge* are no longer available. Our premier 'zine, *The Gamer's Connection*, is still available, however. Please accept our apologies for the mix-up.

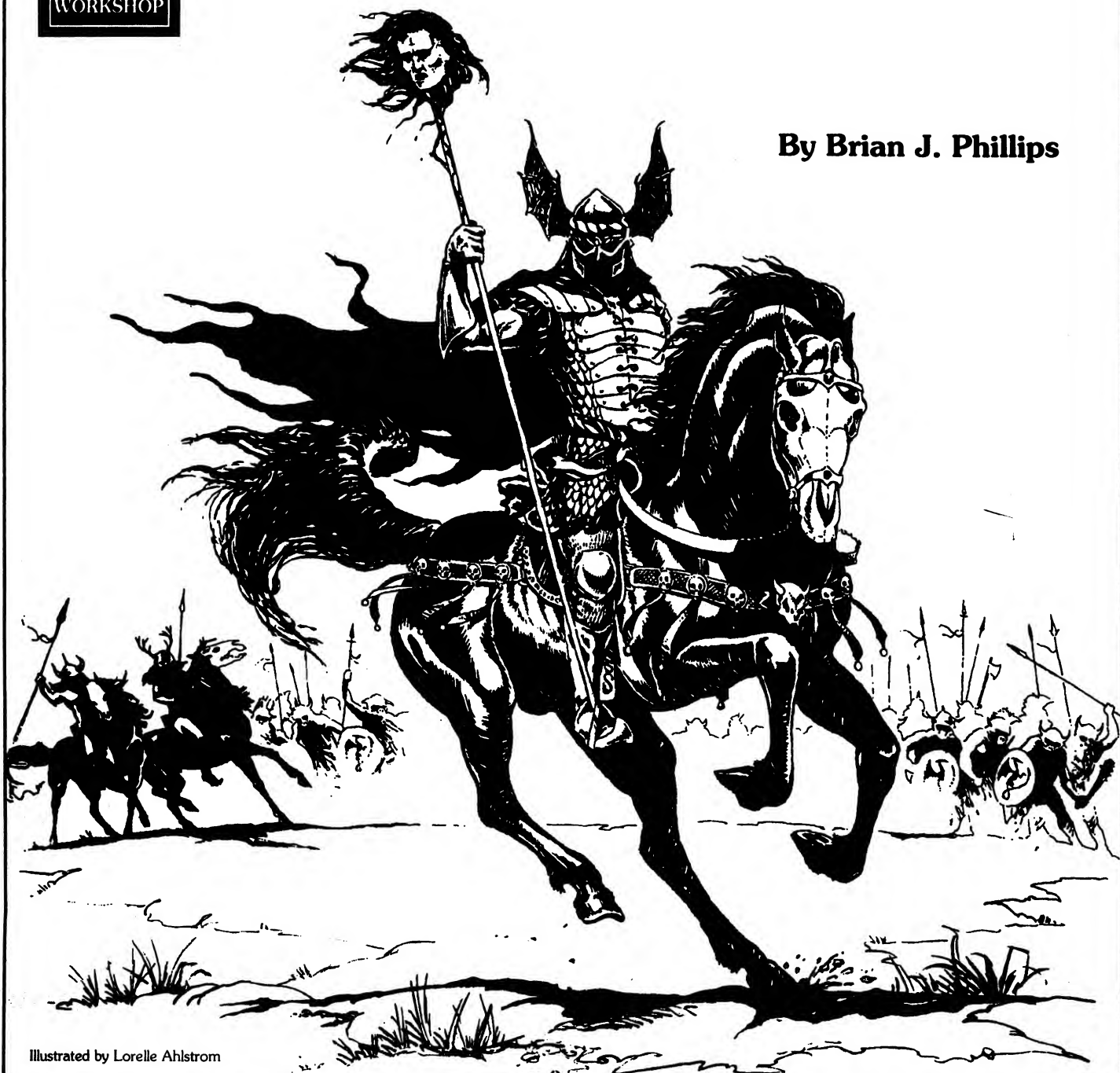
Mark Arsenault
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GAME
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Tuning Up Your Armies

By Brian J. Phillips



Illustrated by Lorelle Ahlstrom

It's a familiar scene, as old as gaming itself. Six PC's, five, even a single player character sitting atop a pile of dead monsters as tall as their castle wall, moaning over how easy it was, and how stupid these monsters were. But wait, aren't these the very same creatures that held the players in fear only six months ago?

The Mad Goblin Marauders were suddenly a mere annoyance rather than the plague of the countryside. What happened? The groups and armies needed to significantly threaten player characters must now be so powerful as to lay waste to the entire world (or, dare I say, Universe?). As adventures grow, and players become even more powerful, where does it all end?

After all, even Gandalf feared the Orcish Armies for what they were, deadly and formidable. If only those good old dependable villains hadn't been overshadowed by the players' rapidly growing experience, power, and arsenals, the GM might well threaten the world/universe yet another time, and send his minions on. But it doesn't have to be like that. The work and aggravation of creating a custom group, ready to give any players a run for their money (or at least be a severe pain in the rear), can be minimized by the use of the **Unit Tune Up Chart** following. These can be used on NPC groups (allies or enemies) or any size, from 3 to 3 million, each advantage adding teeth to a soon to be troublesome encounter.

Won't the players be surprised when they find new tricks and challenges, revamping the old terrors into the new. Stand by! They're back! Of course, the generation process is simplicity in itself. Merely draw a card from a standard 52 card playing deck, then reference the table below. For an increased challenge to veteran players, draw more than one card. Several cards will definitely provide a significant and entertaining experience to the players.

Clubs: Miscellaneous

Ace ♠ Prior Enemy Knowledge: The group will have in depth knowledge of all the players abilities, powers, and also those of their henchmen. They will utilize this to exploit weaknesses in any battles.

Two ♠ Increased Area Knowledge: The group will have detailed and familiar

knowledge of the surrounding area, giving them hidden scout sites, great ambush positions, and an overall advantage on the battlefield.

Three ♣ Anti Magic: The group has some form of protection against magic that is used against them. This will render most spells useless.

Four ♣ Experience Against Magic: Magical attacks against this group will be dealt with expediently; they've seen it all before. Archers will be deployed against spell casters. These troops will rarely rout when faced with magical spells or creatures.

Five ♣ Battle Magic: This group has magicians capable of using battle magic. Usually these magicians will cast protection spells before the battle, then engage enemy magicians or elite units thereafter.

Six ♣ Misinformation: The group has a misleading reputation. For instance, their reputation might be that they are weak, when they are actually strong, or they have a dragon, when they don't.

Seven ♣ Poison Attacks: This group routinely uses poison with not only their archers, but also their regular troops. The poisons will usually be quick acting and strong.

Eight ♣ Experienced Secondary Leaders: This group has a strong and experienced group of secondary leaders. If its primary leader should fall in battle, it will continue on regardless in an organized fashion. In some instances, the new leaders may actually be more competent (and thus more dangerous) than the old.

Nine ♣ Protective Magic: The men in this group have charms and enchantments protecting them from spells. Each individual has an "always on" protection against hostile magic.

Ten ♣ Uncommon Valor: The members of this group are brave and strong. They never rout, never make morale checks, and share an *esprit de corps* that makes them a formidable fighting team.

Jack ♣ Sixth Sense: The commander of the forces has a "knack" of avoiding

ambushes and traps, to put the enemy at a disadvantage. There is no knowledge or skill, merely a gut instinct that is surprisingly accurate.

Queen ♠ Local Allies: Nearby are others that the group can call upon to reinforce its strength if it needs to. These may be loyal peasantry, friendly lords, or a mercenary company.

King ♠ Luck: The strangest things happen to give this group opportunity. The weather is always cooperative with them. Their food and medicine are unusually good, and most people who work with them are highly skilled.

Diamonds: Tactics

Ace ♦ Shield Wall: A shield wall is when the men on the outer perimeter of the group form a solid line with their shields much like a wall. From behind this line, men with long weapons such as spears and pikes will engage the enemy, while the shieldmen defend against all attacks. In the meantime, the enemy cannot reach his attacker.

Two ♦ Cannon Fodder: The group has a sizable number of members that are considered "expendable" by its commanders. Usually they will be used to engage an enemy in battle and while they are fighting, the strong troops shift into a tactically advantageous position and hammer the enemy with an unexpected attack.

Three ♦ Ambush: The group will have a pre arranged site for battle and plan on surprising the enemy there.

Four ♦ Feint: This involves an apparent move by the group to meet one goal, forcing the enemy to move to defend against it. In reality, the goal was only to force the enemy to move. This will usually set up a fierce attack on the area that the enemy troops deployed from.

Five ♦ Pike/Spear Line: This is a line of soldiers armed with pikes and spears in excess of 12 feet long, stretching the entire length of the army. This line is usually a dozen ranks thick, and serves to keep enemies without long weapons from attacking. It also is an excellent defense against calvary charges.

Six ♦ Entrapment: The group will try to surround the enemy, attacking from all sides in an effort to destroy them utterly.

Seven ♦ Skirmish Tactics: This is when the group sends men ahead of it who spread out with missile weapons. The archers will get under cover and proceed to fire into the army. Any attack upon the archers will cause them to withdraw back to the main group, and the main group will deal with the attack.

Eight ♦ Pinpoint Attack: This is a fierce assault into a specific area or person. This might be directed against a unit, such as cavalry, or a person, such as a general or king. The object of this is to destroy or capture a key element of the struggle.

Nine ♦ Night Attack: This group is familiar with night warfare. They will launch night attacks against enemy camps at every opportunity, stealing supplies, setting fire to equipment, or just generally harassing the enemy and depriving them of sleep.

Ten ♦ Signal Corps: The group has the ability to communicate over large distances with signals. This will prevent surprise and flank attacks by the enemy. This also makes the organization of the force better, thus being more difficult to route in battle.

Jack ♦ Organized Retreat and Reform: The group is drilled and experienced in the art of retreat. When events turn against them and force them to withdraw from battle, they fall back fighting and in an orderly fashion until they escape from immediate combat. At that point, they reform and ready themselves to go back into combat.

Queen ♦ Flank Movements: The group has an affinity for flanking movements. This enables the group to move around the enemy's battle lines, gaining the bonus of a side attack along with the normal frontal attack. This maneuver is especially good to break enemy morale in the battle.

King ♦ Blitzkrieg: This tactic is a quick and deadly attack. This is not a suicide charge. Ranged weapons will be used to keep an enemy occupied as a large, powerful force rushes upon them.

Hearts: Equipment

Ace ♥ Combustible Weapons: This includes tar, oil, and naphtha that can be hand thrown or catapulted from field engines. The combustibles will be lit before they are thrown or shot. This weapon type allows for a larger area of effective damage.

Two ♥ Heavy Armor: Members of this group are outfitted in superior plate and banded armors. Horses will usually have metal barding as well.

Three ♥ Quality Weapons: These are weapons are forged by the highly experienced, and are made of stronger metal than normal weapons. They may also possess a mythical property and are less likely to break in parrying.

Four ♥ Field Engines: Field engines include the larger siege weapons and catapults, these weapons are quite large and therefore not very mobile. By the weapons sheer size they are capable of inflicting massive damage at a greater distance.

Five ♥ Trained Mounts: Trained mounts are excellent tools in the use of warfare. They may include such creatures as horses, wolves and griffins. These mounts very rarely fail during any combat situation; they are semi-intelligent and are completely obedient to their riders.

Six ♥ Chariots: The chariot is most efficient when used to carry a Bowman. The driver will drive the chariot past the enemy at a safe distance, allowing the Bowman to take choice shots.

Seven ♥ Heavy Weapons: Heavily armed troops such as greatswordsmen and heavy axemen have the power to smash through lighter enemy forces, scattering them with death dealing blows.

Eight ♥ Mounts: This group has many mounts for combat, equipment and men. This gives the user a faster and more proficient manner of entering combat or withdrawing troops.

Nine ♥ Trained Beasts: Trained beasts include such creatures as large dogs, mountain lions or stampeding cattle. These beasts are commanded and then released to disperse enemy forces. This

tactic causes the enemy to become confused and disorderly, giving their opponent the upper hand.

Ten ♥ Heavy Missile Weapons: Arquebuses, Heavy Crossbows, and hand cannon are present in the group. The sheer range and power behind these weapons causes a great advantage.

Jack ♥ Magical Weapons: This is to include weapons that are enchanted or made of exceptionally fine quality. Examples may include added damage, a sword that causes fire damage or a weapon that has a very slim chance of breaking.

Queen ♥ Magical Armor: The magical armor category also encompasses particularly well-made armor. Examples may include added defensive capability due to high-quality work, or armor which protects the wearer from such things as extreme heat or cold.

King ♥ Magical Devices and Items: Magical devices and items can be anything but the use is the most important factor. The magic that radiates from the device may hide a large army from the advancing enemy or it may protect them from such things as lighting, missile weapons, or magic cast by enemy wizards.

Spades: Personnel

Ace ♠ Strong Leader: A strong leader will give the army a source of direction; it also implies good communication. Along with command structure, having a good leader may give the army the ability of tactical or strategic moves.

Two ♠ Magician: This gives the group the ability to use magic during combat. If they already possess a sorcerer, drawing this card will advance the sorcerer's abilities.

Three ♠ Crack Archery Squad: These archers are highly trained and experienced. They are excellent shots and very rarely fall under extreme combat.

Four ♠ Shieldmen: The warriors of this group possess shields to defend against enemy warriors and missiles.

Five ♠ Elite Footmen: These footmen are more experienced in combat than

normal infantry. They have good organization and battle experience.

Six ♠ Support Personal: Giving the group support personnel allows for the quick movement of field machines and supplies such as food, clothing, extra weapons, and ammunition. The support personnel may also be medical personnel.

Seven ♠ Engineers: This allows field engines, defensive positions and traps to be constructed in a shorter period of time. It also means quality construction and better efficiency. Engineers may sap fortifications, making a fortress vulnerable to attack.

Eight ♠ Heroes: Heroes are those who inspire the men. They give the less-experienced fighters someone to follow and trust which leads to an enthusiastic and efficient army. Heroes may lead charges and hold positions victoriously against incredible odds. Everyone fighting alongside the hero is treated as a "Fanatic" for combat purposes.

Nine ♠ Powerful Allies: This gives the group the option to call upon a powerful person (i.e. a king, bishop, or wizard) to help them in a desperate situation.

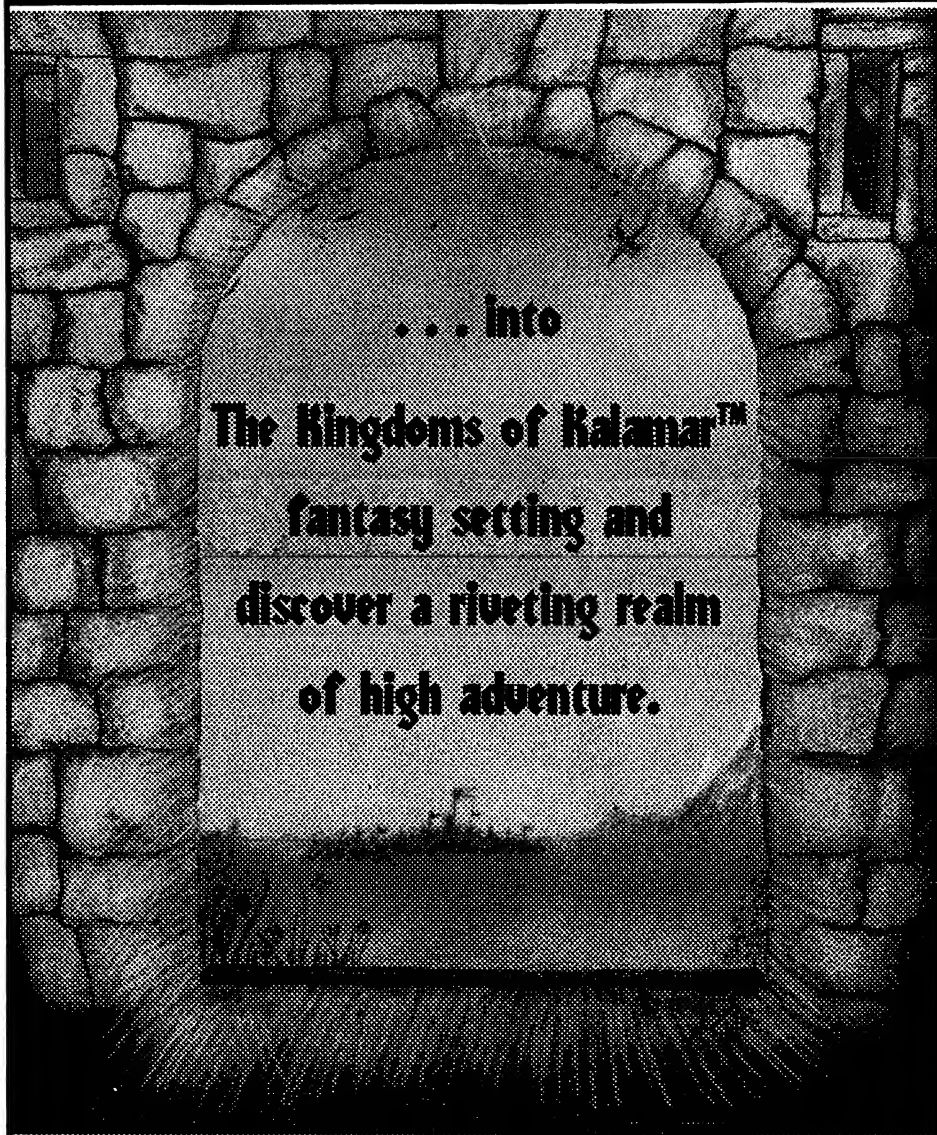
Ten ♠ Stealth Unit: This unit supplies the leaders with valuable information on the enemy's forces. This information can include the size and exact location of the enemy. The unit can infiltrate the enemy's lines in disguise, and may have a chance at a assassination attempt.

Jack ♠ Priest: Priests keep the morale of a group high. They increase the bravery of the men making them bold and determined in their just cause.

Queen ♠ Elite Cavalry: These are highly experienced calvary. They give the group a fast and potent attacking force. These are especially useful against enemy knights.

King ♠ Veteran Army or Unit: The veteran army is a highly experienced force that is advanced in all aspects of warfare and tactics. □

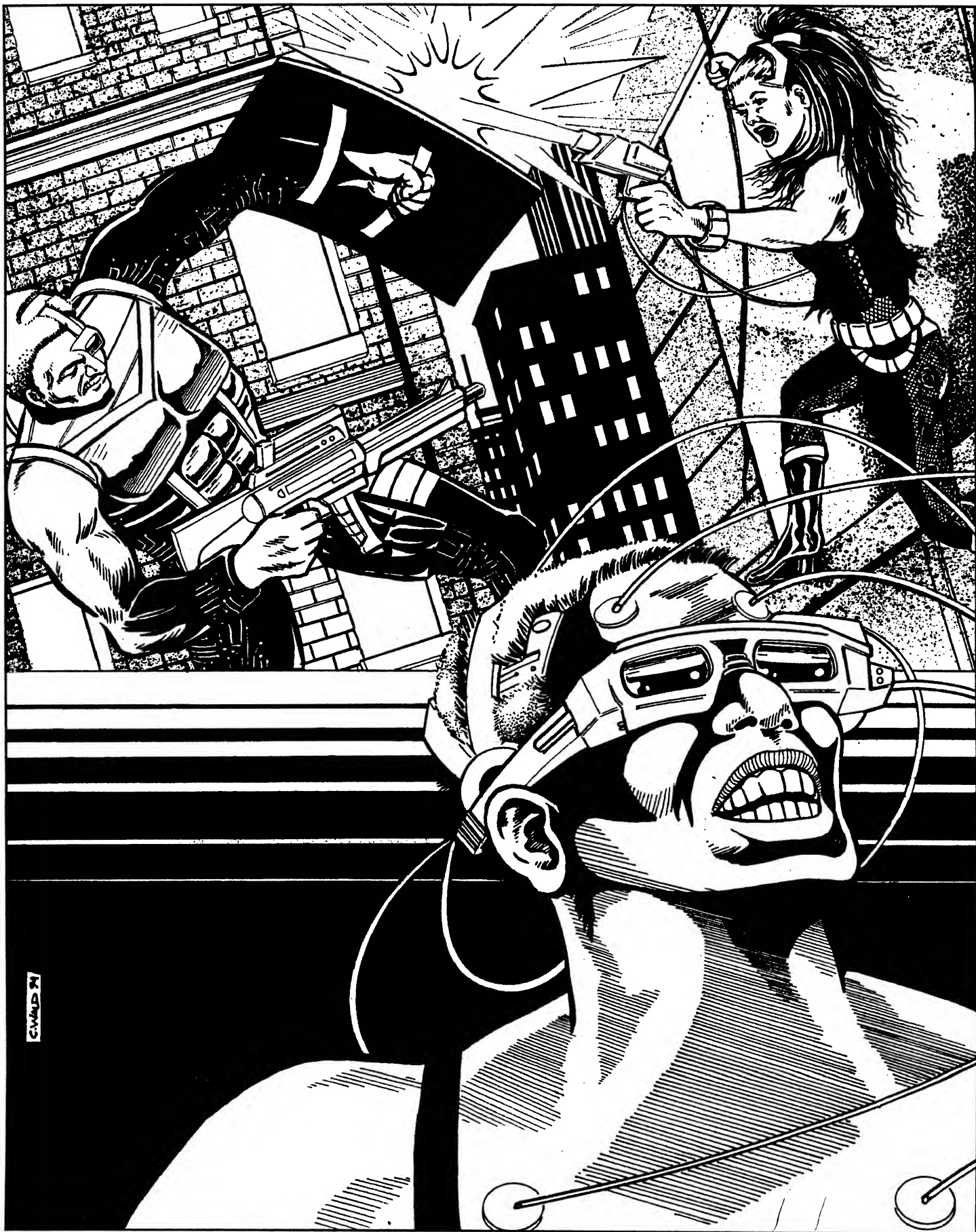
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Wide-Awake in Slumberland

New Uses for Virtual Reality in Underground™

By Spike Y. Jones © 1994 Illustrated by Christina Wald

I found it interesting that in two of last summer's new games I found references to Virtual Reality, not as aspects of the game mechanics, but as aspects of the game world. One treated VR as a detail of the background culture to be mentioned repeatedly and then ignored. The other came up with a novel way of simulating VR in a traditional RPG, and gave you a reason to do so, but didn't make a big deal of it. The two games are, respectively, *Mayfair's Underground™* and *TSR's Bughunters™* game for the *Amazing Engine System™*.

In *Underground* the year is 2021, and your PC is a professional soldier who has received a number of radical genetic enhancements (superpowers such as Electrical Discharge, Micro Vision, or a protective Chitin layer) from a mercenary "conflict firm." Unfortunately, these changes to your genetic structure (and your lifestyle) are hard to cope with, and to prevent you from going crazy in an unacceptable way, your employers dropped you into a sensory deprivation tank for 14 months. During that time, they run you through a VR simulation of the life of your alter ego, a traditional four-color, larger-than-life superhero. This simulation (called Slumberland) provides you with an alternative explanation for your powers, e.g. you grew your extra limbs as the result of a bite from a radioactive spider, and gives you a black-and-white worldview that lets you see whatever enemy your employers point you at as a true "villain" instead of just some other sorry soldier in a situation he doesn't comprehend any better than you do; you go crazy in a way that's acceptable to your employers.

Slumberland, the reasons for it, descriptions of it, and other details about

it appear throughout *Underground* and its supplements, but it's curious that, after spending so much effort to describe Slumberland, the game simply abandons it. The only time it actually comes into play is during character creation, when the player gets to make a die roll against the Skill Level of the genetic counselor (who oversees one's PC's time in Slumberland) to determine how stressful your enhancements are to the PC, and how likely he will be to suffer "metagenic psychosis" in the future. That's it. One set of die rolls during character creation, and you never have to hear about Slumberland during actual game play.

By the time you actually start playing your character he's finished his tour of duty in the military, has been demobilized ("demobbed"), and is now left to discover how much America hates and fears its current crop of super-powered (and super-dangerous) combat veterans, and how little the government is willing or able to do about the situation. The PC's "formative years" in the military, the friendships he made, the hatreds born, the death, the destruction, and suffering he visited on competitor's soldiers and helpless villagers, all that is behind him without even a mention (unless the optional rules for generating a military career history are used, and even these three pages only determine ending rank, decorations won, flashbacks established, and catastrophic events suffered, all of which can be gained/avoid by good die rolls). And you don't even get the fun of using your big-gun military hardware the way it's supposed to be used: against the big-gun military hardware of the enemy's boosted soldiers (Neo-Deutsch who spent time in a German VR program heavy on Wagner and Hitler, and members of the

Far East Collective programmed to think they are channelling mythological spirits).

Many of the NPCs in *Underground* supplements change greatly between creation and demobbing; as a result of their reactions to combat in the real world after more than a year living a comic book, they have new personalities (and psychoses), take on new and darker codenames, get a reason to live, and possibly an enemy to fight. But the PCs are expected to be as angry and cynical as these combat veterans without having gone through these anger-producing and cynicism-inducing experiences.

Skipping to *Bughunters*, once again you play a genetically-engineered soldier sometime post-2130, this time a synthetic human whose physical characteristics have been optimized to make him a living combat machine. The Virtual Reality in this game comes in when he has to go on a mission. Before "unusually difficult or critical" missions, commanders can put PCs through a VR dry-run of the planned operation, in order to give the PCs "first-hand" knowledge of the site they'll be attacking, and the opposition they're expected to face, instead of just printed or spoken mission briefings. Of course, the actual mission isn't likely to go exactly the way the VR programmers planned, but PCs should be able to gain some useful experience from the process.

In game terms, the GM is encouraged to actually play through the VR dry-run, and after its successful completion, he gets to run the adventure again, this time throwing in any surprises the intelligence-gatherers and computer programmers couldn't anticipate. Experience points gained during the dry-run can be used as "luck points" during the real mission, at least up until the point that the real thing

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diverges so much from the VR-version that the experience you gained is worthless. And that's about it for Virtual Reality in **Bughunters**.

Maybe it was because I read the two games in quick succession, but the idea came to me that Virtual Reality as used in **Bughunters** would make a great addition to **Underground**. To let the players get a better feel for their characters, to let them know more about the political system they initially fight against, and to make good use of the neglected gaming potential of Slumberland, two things have to be added to **Underground**. Instead of dropping fully-formed PCs (that the players have no real feel for yet) right onto the dirty streets of L.A., the GM should start a campaign by running prequel adventures that let the players and PCs experience warfare in 2021. And to take advantage of Slumberland's potential, it should be modified in order to make it an integral part of the game, instead of a much-discussed, never-seen background detail.

Running adventures that take place during the PC's military career is an easy enough task; the only real difficulty is that *Mayfair* hasn't yet released any examples of the foreign boosteds that the PCs would likely face, so the GM would have to make up his own rules for such characters and be willing to face the possibility that the "real" thing will be completely different if and when *Mayfair* decides to show us what it is. These prequel adventures should be short and relatively simple in construction, unless the GM wants to spend a considerable amount of time running a campaign set in a foreign war zone as opposed to using a few fire-fights in some exotic locale to set the scene for the vets' demobilization. Moreover, care should be taken not to kill off the PCs before the main campaign is reached (although killing NPCs and severely wounding PCs are highly recommended as demonstrations of the effects of **Underground**'s personal heavy artillery on flesh, however much that flesh is boosted).

To raise the irony level of the campaign (something which every **Underground** campaign needs), you needn't set the prequel adventures in some remote jungle paradise; some conflict firms have contracts that require them to employ boosted operatives within the US (such as the Los Angeles Peace Force, a

division of Mars Corporation). An adventure of this sort would employ rookie boosted PCs ordered to help quell boosted rioters "mobbing" a Veterans' Administration office, for example, only to find themselves on the other side of the fence a few years later as vets peacefully demonstrating for their rights, only to be "quelled" by a new force of super-goons.

If you intend to run a pre-published adventure, you can simply run through the initial chapters of it (up until the point when the programmers have no further advance information they need to impart to the PCs) twice, getting twice the play time out of at least some portions of the product.

The actual running of the VR simulations of Slumberland will likely be harder than designing the adventures because the GM must ensure that these adventures feel different than regular **Underground** adventures. While straight **Underground** adventures should evoke the dark and deadly tone of some underground comics and recent years worth of mainstream comics, Slumberland recreates the four-color feel of Golden Age comics; the Badger or the Punisher vs. the original Captain America.

As a comic book historian (George Olshevsky, *Marvel Comics Index*, No. 8A, 1979) once said, "After the United States entered the war against the Axis, the villains encountered by Captain America and Bucky became truly grotesque - fanged, fiendish Orientals, incredibly dense Italians, and vicious, sadistic Germans", and that is how the programmers of Slumberland portray Neo-Deutsch and Far East Collective supers. While the superpowers and tactics of enemy boosteds have to be as accurate as possible to prepare the heroes for actual encounters in the field, other details such as their names and appearances will be altered to fit into the propaganda the heroes are fed, so that, despite whatever they may be known as in their homelands, the PCs will encounter SuperNip, Hitler's Little Helper, and the like in Slumberland. For that matter, the heroes themselves could go by different names in Virtual Reality: the codenames their company gave them, as opposed to whatever handle they may have come up with for themselves.

(In a homefront simulation, the Slumberland caricatures of the opponents the PCs have to face won't be as blatant as

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those in foreign fights, but the comic the characters sleep through will be programmed to give the heroes the impression that they are fighting for "justice, law, and order" while their demobilized opponents are depicted as insane, America-hating terrorists, whatever their true political leanings or complaints.)

And the rules of Slumberland are different than those of the real world. For sure, the PCs will have the same enhancements in VR as they have in real life, but they will be much more effective and flashier; it should almost feel like you're using a different, simpler rules system to run the game in Slumberland. Pay less attention to fine detail of range modifiers and the like, and more to the dialogue, action, sights, and sounds. Don't describe the grossity of wounds, even if caused by weapons (guns, claws, chainsaws, etc.) that would do graphic damage in the real world. And remember, the original purpose of Slumberland was to help genetically enhanced soldiers cope with their modifications, so the chances of a hero suffering from metagenic feedback trauma and experience Psychosis are greatly reduced (assume that characters have a Tolerance five times higher than normal while in Slumberland).

Similarly, in Slumberland very few Karma Points and no Reward Points should be awarded, no matter how well the PCs succeed in the simulation. No Karma Points should be given out for simply rolling a 24 on a Challenge, and should only be awarded for good roleplaying in the style of a four-color comic, not a standard **Underground** session, and if the PCs manage to discover something

that the mission planners didn't think of, such as a blind spot in the target's defenses or a potentially dangerous hole in the official plan.

And as with **Bughunters**, any gained Karma Points can only be used in the adventure they were awarded for (simulating the PCs "remembering" something from their "mission briefing" that allows them to avoid a hazard or notice a difference between the simulation and the reality), until such time as the reality diverges from the simulation.

One important difference between Slumberland as it is used in the official Underground background and how it's used here is the amount of time available to programmers.

If they can compress the entire life story of a superhero into the 14 months of real time a character spends in Slumberland, then they should have no problem running him through a couple of days of a specific mission in hours.

Unfortunately, considering the speed with which situations requiring superpowered help can come up, the programmers

might not have the luxury of months or years to create their simulation in the first place. If they have to get a team of operatives ready to take on a target (whether it's Paraguay or Pittsburgh), they won't have the time to do a thorough programming job.

Instead they'll reuse backdrops, plot-lines, or depict unimportant details as line drawings (think: "early 1990s primitive VR constructs") or as static sketches with little animation.

The PC's employers would have taken the time to pre-program places where contracts might logically be expected to crop up (Los Angeles and other cities of interest, countries with wars currently underway or with known instabilities, for example) and VR files on important assets (i.e. boosted operatives) of rival corporations and foreign powers ("just in case").

If a PC realizes this, it might look a little suspicious when an operation is billed as 'spur of the moment' but has full VR support already programmed and ready for the operatives; a semi-obvious hook for another adventure.

Unless the GM decides to restrict his campaigning to the military careers of his player's characters, this gaming application of Slumberland will only be a part of the first few adventures of his campaign.

Still there are lots of other ramifications of the Virtual Reality technology described in **Underground** (Hell Bent, the first **Underground** adventure from Atlas Games, describes VR technology that can give the average man on the street "rose-colored glasses"), which are best left to the individual GM to discover and extrapolate. □

* **Underground** is a role-playing game produced by Mayfair Game Inc. **Bughunters** is a role-playing supplement for TSR's Amazing Engine system. Both games are available at your local gamestore.



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A TASTE OF ARMAGEDDON: NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN TWILIGHT: 2000

By William Spencer-Hale • Illustrated by Lorelle Anlstrom

It had rained for days, soaking everything and causing my fatigues to stick to my body. I had ran out of dry clothes several days ago; after awhile you become accustomed to being miserable, I guess. I can live with it but I don't have to like it. Why do I volunteer for these missions, anyway?

Eastern Europe had turned into a slimy, brown mud pit. I really hate this time of year. I will never understand how anyone could have ever lived here. I guess I should stop thinking about it and get on with why we came here.

I claw my way to the top of the ridge, motioning for my party to stay low. Down the hill, about 1500 meters, is our goal. The village is small; several thatched huts in a circle partially obscured by the smoke of cooking fires, but its peaceful, quiet appearance is only a facade. Within its boundaries is a weapon of ultimate destruction; the cause of the world's suffering. Hidden within the borders of this placid village was a functioning nuclear device. We had come to take it back; children shouldn't play with fire.

So far, our journey had been uneventful with the exception of the mud and the rain, but things were about to heat up. Posted at regular intervals around the camp were sentries; alert and well-armed, keeping a watchful eye on the surrounding countryside. It was amazing they had not spotted us already. No time like the present. I signal to my party to lock and load their weapons and prepare for the attack. The odds look pretty even and we are all too cold, wet and tired to sit here any longer. Its going to be one helluva fight.

We split up into three groups; one to flank left, the other to flank right and the last, the one that I will lead personally, to rush the front. Sounds like a good plan to me. With the wave of my hand, we go for it.

It seems that we have the element of surprise. Several 5.56mm rounds impact on the opposition before they can so much as level a weapon in our direction. These damn warlords can be so cocky. It took them a moment to orient themselves

but, when they did, all hell broke loose. Gunfire erupted from all sides, splitting the morning fog with bright flashes and filling the air with the sound of hundreds of resounding booms. Sometimes, I love this job.

The path to the center of the village was fairly clear; only minimal resistance was present. I suppose everyone else is busy securing the area from the other two assault teams. I hope they are having fun.

Beneath a faded, gray tarp lay the climax to our journey. I signal for my team to take up defensive positions as I remove the tarp. The device has no rocket motors attached and the guidance section is missing as well. Its unable to be launched at an enemy but I don't think that was their plan, anyway.

Time to disarm this thing; it should only take a few minutes. I remove the cover plate carefully; throwing the screws thoughtlessly onto the ground. As I look into the glowing red display of the status panel, I feel a shock run through me and I sit passively on the cold ground.

One of my team members looks over at me questioninglly. I smile and motion him to watch our perimeter; what he does not know will not hurt him. Not yet, anyway. I continue to stare into the bleak, emotionless display as it informs me of my fate. 25..24..23..23..22..21...

I smile slightly to myself; lighting a cigarette and taking a long drink from my canteen to soothe my parched throat.

Nothing to do now but wait.

The Role of Nuclear Weapons in Twilight:2000

The world of **Twilight:2000** is dark, callous and often fatal. It is ravaged by famine, disease and war. It is a testimony to the failure of mankind. Yet, it is also the confirmation of mankind's technological prowess; his ability to overcome his environment through perseverance and knowledge. Unfortunately, mankind used his knowledge to create weapons of destruction and, in so doing, cast all of

humanity back into a bleak, dark age. Perhaps, there are some things that man should not know. Now, all that is left are ashes, memories and hope.

The first nuclear weapons took to the sky in 1997. The primary targets to be engaged were tactical but this began a tragic and ultimately fatal chain of events. Within days, ICBM's engaged targets on all fronts; economic, strategic and industrial centers were laid to waste. The end had begun and hell had ascended to earth.

Despite all the defensive cold-war propaganda of the late 20th-century; rhetoric meant to justify their existence, nuclear weapons brought nothing but pain, torment and death.

In **Twilight:2000**, there are presently no rules covering the use of nuclear weapons. This was no accidental omission. Nuclear weapons represent the ultimate destructive power of mankind; the ability to split the atom and cleanse the world by fire. For the most part, players should not be given access to nuclear munitions. The gross destructive power of such weapons can completely tilt the balance of the game in favor of the players; robbing them of any challenge and making the adventure seem too easy (if your enemy annoys you, nuke 'em). Despite this, there are several ways that these weapons can play a part in **Twilight:2000**.

They can pose a terrible threat to the safety of the players and the rebuilding of the world. In the hands of petty warlords, these weapons could be far more dangerous than they were under the protection of the established governments of the 20th-century. History tells us how safe we were then. This can provide a great basis for an adventure but more on that later.

Also, renegade nukes, those in the possession of no one, can give the players a fast-paced, hectic race to retrieve them before an enemy can. Another great adventure scenario would be to have the players recover and disarm a



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nuke before that is endangering a particular area.

The possibilities are endless and, with a little imagination on the part of the Referee, the players can learn the true horror of nuclear weapons. Nukes can be used as a sidetrack from an existing adventure or as a full-blown campaign.

The Hierarchy of Madness

In the late 20th-century, there were many types of nukes. Some had specific purposes while others, like the ICBM's were general purpose and could engage various types of targets. Following is a listing, with examples, of the classifications of nuclear weapons prior to the year 2000.

Short Range: This echelon of nuclear munitions was targeted against small troop and equipment concentrations on a tactical battlefield level. Although they were few in number due to overall cost and the inherent danger they represented to friendly forces, these weapons were fielded heavily in the 1980's. Among them was the controversial backpack nuke; a small, man-portable nuclear device that could be carried onto the battlefield by individual troops. This weapon had no propulsion unit itself; instead, its purpose was to implement a scorched-earth policy in case a particularly important position was overthrown by an enemy force. There were few instances where these weapons were used in an offensive capacity.

Another well-used and widely fielded short range nuke was the Lance. The Lance missile system was a crew-operated, vehicle based short range weapon whose purpose was to engage tactical troop concentrations on the battlefield. The Lance was capable of delivering a conventional warhead to its target as well as being nuclear capable. Although the nuclear warhead was relatively low-yield, it could be devastating nonetheless. For maximum efficiency, the weapon system was manned by a crew of between four to seven soldiers.

Medium Range: There were a larger number of weapons under this classification. Most, if not all, were used in an offensive, first-strike capacity. Several of these weapons, fielded by both the Soviets and the U.S., earned much attention in the media in the late 1980's. These were the Ground Launched Cruise Missile

(GLCM), the Pershing II and their Soviet sister weapons, the SS-20 and SS-23.

The Ground Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM) was a land-based nuclear weapon system fielded by the U.S. Air Force. Its purpose was to engage larger concentrations of troops and armor on the battlefield in a first-strike capacity. Meaning that, if a threat presented itself from an enemy, these weapons would be used against a target as a warning that such things would not be tolerated. This was not the only manner in which they were used, of course, but it was the primary use of such weapons.

The Pershing II missile system was much the same as the Ground Launched Cruise Missile except that it was fielded by the U.S. Army. Both weapon systems were portable, being carried by large trucks and launched from trailers. Each system was fully self-sufficient. It carried equipment for all necessary communications; launch, repair and troop survival. These weapons were also supported by infantry units who provided security in case of ground attack.

Their Soviet sister weapons, the SS-20 and SS-23, were fielded in much the same capacity with much the same purpose as their U.S. counterparts, although they were much slower to respond to an external threat and were far from the technological level of the U.S. weapons. They all carried variable yield warheads and could be programmed to frightening levels, depending on the target to be engaged.

The Ground Launched Cruise Missile, the Pershing II and their Soviet counterparts, the SS-20 and SS-23 were eliminated under the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty of the late 1980's but several of these weapons were secretly maintained by both sides and were used enthusiastically in World War III.

Long Range Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles: This classification of weapons made up the bulk of the nuclear arsenal. The weapons were typically silo-based and kept hidden from aerial surveillance by being buried underground in sparse population areas. Their purpose was to engage large strategic, economic and industrial targets, crippling the opponent's ability to function within their own borders.

A variety of these weapons were created and used in World War III. Among

these were the Peacekeeper and the Minuteman, fielded by the United States and her allies and the SS-18 and SS-24 which were used by the Soviets and the Warsaw Pact countries. They ranged greatly in destructive power but were usually to vulgar levels; each carrying several warheads ranging in destructive power from one to five megatons per warhead. Mankind's lessons were hard-learned.

Weapon: Backpack Nuclear Device
Country of Origin: United States and Russia
Warhead Type: Single nuclear device
Range: Man-portable-no means of independent propulsion
Yield: 1 Kiloton to 1 Megaton

Weapon: Lance Missile
Country of Origin: United States
Warhead Type: Single nuclear or conventional high-explosive device
Range: 200 miles
Yield: maximum 10 kilotons

Weapon: Ground Launched Cruise Missile
Country of Origin: United States
Warhead Type: Single nuclear device
Range: 1500 miles
Yield: variable-maximum 80 kilotons

Weapon: Pershing II Missile System

Country of Origin: United States
Warhead Type: Single nuclear device
Range: 1500-2000 miles
Yield: variable-maximum 80 kilotons

Weapon: SS-20
Country of Origin: Russia
Warhead Type: Single nuclear device
Range: 1500+ miles
Yield: variable-reported to 1 megaton

Weapon: SS-23
Country of Origin: Russia
Warhead Type: Single nuclear device
Range: 1500+ miles
Yield: variable- reported to 1 megaton

Weapon: Peacekeeper (ICBM)
Country of Origin: United States
Warhead Type: Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicle
Range: Can engage a target located anywhere on the globe
Yield: Up to ten 1-megaton warheads (one missile can engage several targets)

Weapon: Minuteman (ICBM)
Country of Origin: United States
Warhead Type: Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicle
Range: Can engage a target located anywhere on the globe
Yield: Up to three 1-megaton warheads (one missile can engage several targets)

Weapon: SS-18
Country of Origin: Russia
Warhead Type: Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicle
Range: Can engage a target located anywhere on the globe
Yield: Up to eight 5-megaton warheads (one missile can engage several targets)

Weapon: SS-24
Country of Origin: Russia
Warhead Type: Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicle
Range: Can engage a target located anywhere on the globe
Yield: Up to six 5-megaton warheads (one missile can engage several targets)

The New Cold War

The world of today is much different than it was only a few years ago. It is a rough, callous world filled with many dangers. The paranoia of mankind, in concert with the use of nuclear weapons, is completely to blame for this. Yet, mankind forgets so easily.

Across Europe, many petty warlords have hoarded the remaining nuclear weapons that were not used and discarded by the former superpowers. They use them as a threat against the poor villagers and farmers whom they attempt to maintain oppressive control over. These weapons are also used as strategic bargaining chips between the various warlords as they attempt to be superior to their oppressive, dictatorial peers. As of yet, they have not been used by these warlords but history, as a rule, does repeat itself.

The Last Argument of Kings: A nuclear adventure for Twilight:2000

The Last Argument of Kings is a short adventure divided into three parts. The goal of the players is to disarm a nuclear device in the possession of a warlord in eastern Europe. Referees are encouraged to expand upon this scenario as they see fit. This adventure could be expanded into a complete campaign with little work on the part of the referee or can be used as a single-night, one time scenario. It is all dependent on the imagination of the referee and the desires of the players.

Setting: The setting of this scenario is the once fertile lands of eastern Europe. It is spring; the rainy season, and travel is dif-

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ficult. The clouds are thick and heavy, refusing the sun and painting the landscape in myriad shades of gray. It is a gloomy time.

Mood: Panic is the mood of this adventure. The players are told of a nuclear device in the hands of a local warlord. Unlike his peers, he has not only threatened to use this device if provoked but has also managed to arm it. The players must rush to the small village where the device is being hidden and disarm it before it is used or the warlords technological ignorance begets a nuclear catastrophe. Time is running out.

Part 1: A Threat of Oppression

The characters have been gathered by their commanding officer for a very urgent briefing. It is explained to them that the warlord, Gunther Kohl, has found and armed a nuclear weapon previously discarded by the United States.

It is not fully known if Gunther Kohl is telling the truth or not but it would be unwise to call his bluff. A wrong decision could mean the loss of hundreds, even thousands, of lives. The characters are dis-

patched to eliminate the nuclear threat and the warlord as well if the opportunity presents itself. They should be told to expect heavy resistance; the warlord will not let go of such a deadly prize so easily.

The characters are given the opportunity to supplement their personal arsenals with whatever weapons and munitions they believe will be needed. The extent of this is left to the discretion of the referee.

Their commanding officer wishes them luck and sends them on their way, explaining the imperative nature of the mission.

Part 2: A Thousand Rainy Days

The warlord's village lies just north of Berlin in a wooded area of the country. It has been raining constantly for weeks and the landscape is very inhospitable.

During their arduous trek, the characters should be constantly challenged by various armed raiders. The number and strength of these are left to the discretion of the referee but it is advised that the opposition should be difficult without being overwhelming. Give the characters a fighting chance.

The characters should be made to feel miserable during their entire journey. Everything that they own; clothes, food and sleeping equipment will become saturated by the constant rain. It is not meant to be a pleasurable journey.

Part 3: Fire Shall Cleanse the Earth

The characters should be assaulted with heavy resistance once they reach the village of the warlord Gunther Kohl. There are perimeter guards posted at various locations to keep watch on the surrounding countryside and deter intruders. The only way path to the center of the village where the nuclear device is stored is a frontal attack. The village is too well-guarded for subterfuge.

Once the characters reach the device, they will discover that it is a Pershing II missile complete with launcher. Although no communications or support equipment are present, the weapon system is complete and capable of engaging a target.

As the players make their way to the warhead section to disarm it they will discover that it is on a pre-programmed countdown to detonation. It is left to the discretion of the referee how much time remains but it is advised to give it a short fuse; between 20 and 30 seconds.

Conclusion: Where to From Here?

The referee has the option of ending this adventure with quite a bang if it is so desired. If this is a one time adventure with pre-rolled characters who have no use outside of this scenario it is advised to do so. It could give the players a healthy respect for nuclear weapons in the game. If this scenario is run as a sidetrack to an existing campaign, it is advised to give the characters an avenue of escape. Perhaps have the countdown mechanism fail during the final few seconds before detonation.

If the referee wishes to spare the characters from nuclear annihilation, it should be noted that they still must fight their way out of the warlord's village and that the trek homeward will be just as wet and miserable as their expedition to the village. It's still a long journey home. □

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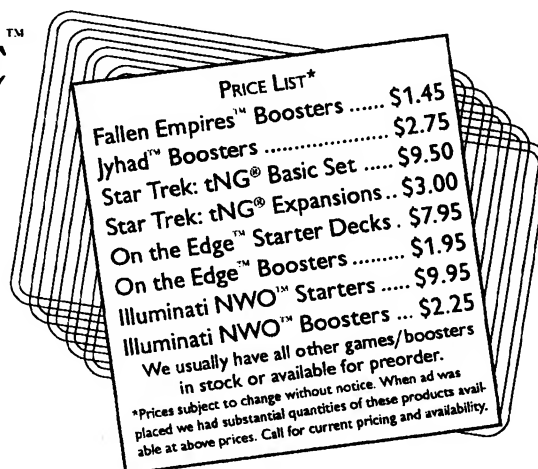
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Ridiculous Manor

A Generic Adventure

by Dave & Michele Newton ©1994

This is a short universal adventure designed to be used with a variety of roleplaying game systems. It should work well with any system that allows for time and dimension travel. It may even serve as a diversion from within a completely different genre, such as fantasy. One of our groups entered this scenario from a Mythus™ adventure by diving into a magic pool and emerging from the water in the boathouse. After much exploration, they were able to return home by jumping into the moat from area 10.

Ridiculous Manor will work best if a skill-based system is employed, but should offer acceptable play in any case. If the Player Characters (or Heroic Personas, if you happen to be using a certain multi-genre system) enjoy this scenario, it can serve as a springboard to other adventures that you, as gamemaster, may add later.

Certain conventions are used within this scenario regarding the material contained herein. The text description for each of the interior areas should be read to the players as they enter each room for the first time. There may be clues hidden in these text areas, and if so, they will be detailed for the gamemaster after the general data. Text in italics is for the GM's reference only, and may or may not be revealed to the characters as the gamemaster determines.

Finally, following many of the room keys are special boxed areas containing information about the gates within that room. This information should only be revealed to PCs if they are present when the applicable gates are activated, or if the NPC Arthur provides such knowledge.

Player's Information

Information obtained through various sources has revealed an enigmatic place that exists in the rural countryside not too far away. Reports of this place have brought it to the attention of your respective bureaus, employers, and/or clients. Each of you has been assigned the task of

uncovering the truth behind what has been heard second-hand.

Game Master's Notes

This scenario revolves around a bizarre country house known by the locals as "The Architect's Nightmare". Rumors of strange events and weird sightings abound in the nearby vicinity, and the people who know of the manor tend to avoid it.

Before beginning play, the gamemaster is strongly urged to read the entire scenario at least once. Because of the nature of the manor, there are many different situations that might occur, and the GM must be able to handle a variety of player actions. In addition, the gamemaster will need to choose which gates will be active, and whether or not they function as given in the scenario. The GM should feel free to modify or delete any of those that do not fit his or her campaign, and this is something that should be done before the adventure starts.

Also, there are certain steps the gamemaster should take to prepare a party before they get started. Since the adventure will work best if the PC's skills complement each other, the players should have defined their characters' vocations or professions. The players should also determine the basic goals and motivations of their PCs.

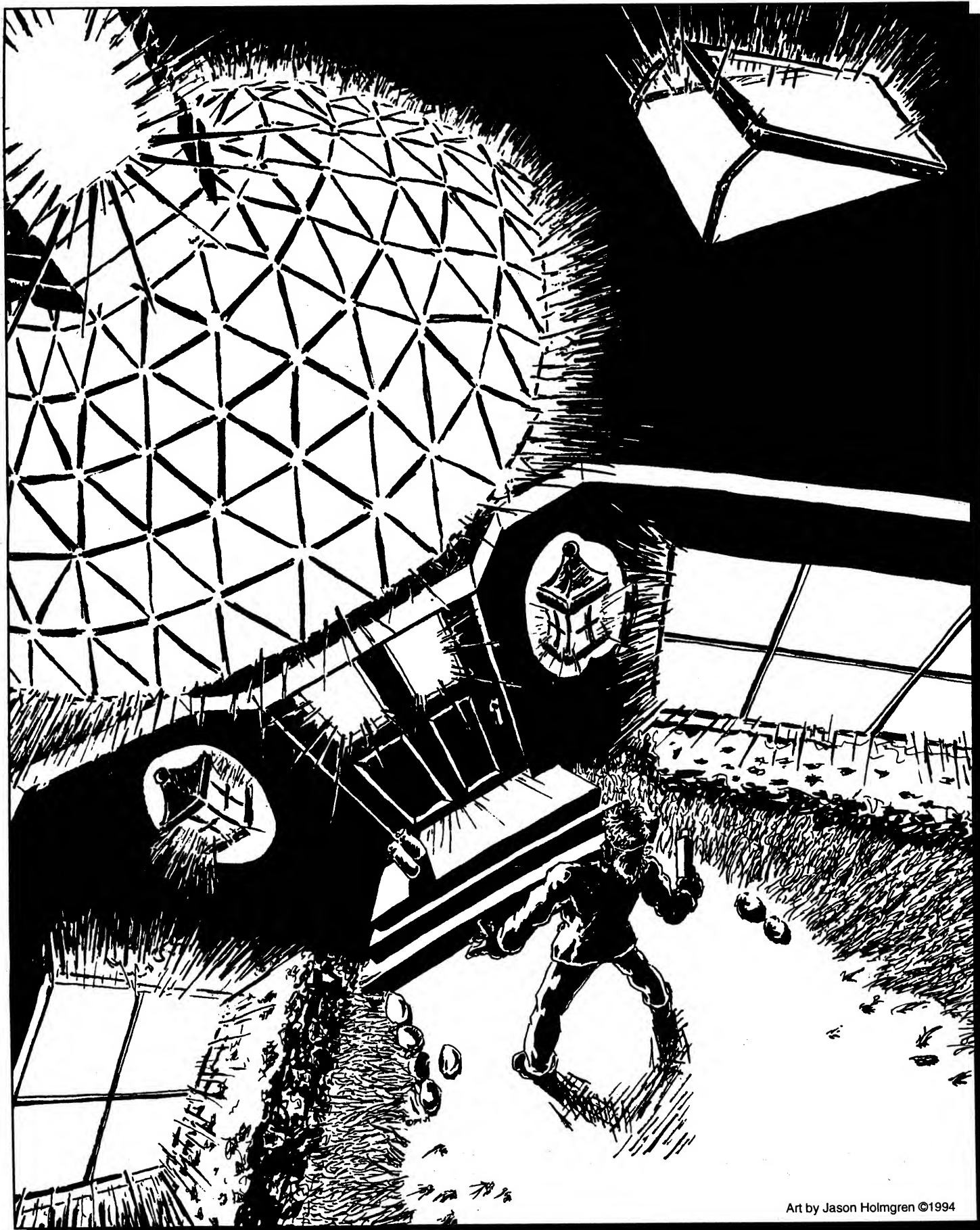
This done, the GM will be able to use such information to provide one or more plausible reasons for the PC's presence. Some examples of this are:

- They have business with the legal owner, either personal or professional.
- They are sent as representatives of a client, or as part of their job.
- They are following up on information found on the Net/Matrix.
- They are investigating the manor for a possible connection with a crime.
- They are investigating the manor for use in an article or story.
- They have been led to the place by dreams, mystic visions, and/or prophecies.

Next, the gamemaster must figure out some reasonable method to introduce the characters to each other. This may be difficult to do if the PCs have opposing backgrounds (a criminal and a police officer are an unlikely match). Are they thrown together by external forces, such as a common employer or client? Are they pursuing different goals, or perhaps the same goal for different reasons? And where do they meet? You might consider getting the characters together at a nearby location, such as a gas station, restaurant, or bar. This is far more likely than having them all show up at the manor at the same time (much less awkward, too). For simplicity, you could say that several of the PCs know each other, and leave it at that.

Finally, the GM may opt to give the characters more starting information in the form of rumors. This is one way to help the players, while adding a little mystery. Just remember to sneak in a few bits of false information along with the truth. This way the players won't be completely sure of the information they obtain. Some possible rumors they might hear are:

- The original owner disappeared and has been missing for years.
- The current occupant is eccentric, and rarely leaves the place.
- Odd radio signals have been detected coming from the manor.
- Monsters have been reported in the lake (or the woods) near the place.
- A pulsing red light can be seen late at night, coming from the belltower.
- Foreign currency has surfaced in the area, most of it of unknown origin.
- Several missing persons have been reported over the past few months.
- A local meteorologist has noticed several abnormal weather conditions lately.
- The Net/Matrix has been experiencing problems, traceable to the manor.
- Electronic devices don't always function properly near the house.



GM Background Information

Situated in a rural area, this oddly-shaped house was built by Carlton Duncan, a crackpot inventor and self-styled mystic. The site where the place was constructed is a nexus point between several physical and temporal dimensions. When Duncan learned this fact, he designed the manor so that many of the permanent, natural gates came into being.

In addition to the physical placement of the manor, there is also a techno-mystical device that amplifies and controls (some-what) the function of the gates. This device, dubbed the Multidimensional Input/Output Power Interface Control (also referred to as the "MIOPIC" device) by Duncan, provides a constant source of power to each of the many separate and unique gates within the manor. MIOPIC also generates electricity for a number of high-tech, wireless circuits located inside the building.

The manor and gates are fundamentally stable; however, the implications of the manor house's existence is cause for scrutiny by a group known as the Fellowship of Temporal Legionnaires (colloquially referred to as "Time Leapers" or simply the FTL). The site is currently under the stewardship of a Fellowship member named Arthur.

Arthur is not a native of this era, but an android from the distant future. He is so human-like in his appearance that his true nature is not detectable under normal circumstances. When utilizing his android abilities, player characters will have a chance to notice his great strength, inhuman speed, and/or incredible dexterity. Arthur will attempt to avoid using these abilities when around others, so he can maintain his cover as a 'normal' person.

Arthur lives alone in the manor with a small cocker spaniel named Saxon. While quite normal, Saxon is very protective of both Arthur and the house. He may take some time to warm up to the PCs (that is, unless they use energy weapons on him!).

Should the PCs ask, he will tell them he is a self-employed mechanical engineer, a "tinkerer" in electronics, and a dabbler in the mystic arts. Do not tell them all of this at once. Instead, leak a little information over the course of several conversations. Let them uncover more as the scenario progresses — like peeling an onion, this scenario should have many layers.

Start

Following the trail of information you've acquired, your quest leads you down a country road near the shore of a large lake. As your vehicle bounces along the road, you round the corner and stop. Before you stands a house that could only be "The Architect's Nightmare"; part manor house, part geodesic dome, this place has a bell tower, turreted windows, and an attached greenhouse.

Optional Start (For Time Travellers)

When a massive storm passed through the region, your temporal disturbance detectors alerted you to a massive flux in the timestream. The ensuing ripple effect has enabled you to triangulate and determine the location from where the flux originated. Now, armed with the necessary knowledge and equipment, you have reached the place.

In a rural setting near the banks of a large lake, you round the corner and stop. You've set the attenuation to the highest setting, and they are still pegged. In front of you sits a house that could be any architect's nightmare. Part manor house, part geodesic dome, this place has a bell tower, turreted windows, and an attached greenhouse. This place has to be the source of the disruption - it is simply the most ridiculous manor you have ever seen. A quick check of your equipment shows that from the flux lines present, the source of the disturbance must be somewhere inside the house.

The Decision

The obvious next step is to enter and investigate; but before you can even pull into the driveway, you are faced with your first encounter — a small, golden cocker spaniel runs up from beside the house and begins barking ferociously at you and your vehicle.

The players must make a decision at this point. They may get out and approach the house, and deal with the dog somehow. Or they can return at a later time — perhaps under some "official" pretext that will enable them to inspect the house.

A successful roll versus Animal Handling (or the like) will cause the dog to obey a PC, but only on a limited basis, and not for long. Any aggressive behavior toward him will make all subsequent rolls more difficult. Killing the dog is definitely not a good idea. Despite what the characters might imagine, he is just a normal dog. Harming him will

make Arthur suspicious, and will not help the group in any way.

If they choose to stay, the characters have a few options, but let them determine their course of action without any coaching. They can knock at the front door, they can sneak around the exterior of the house, or they may attempt to break in without invitation at any number of locations.

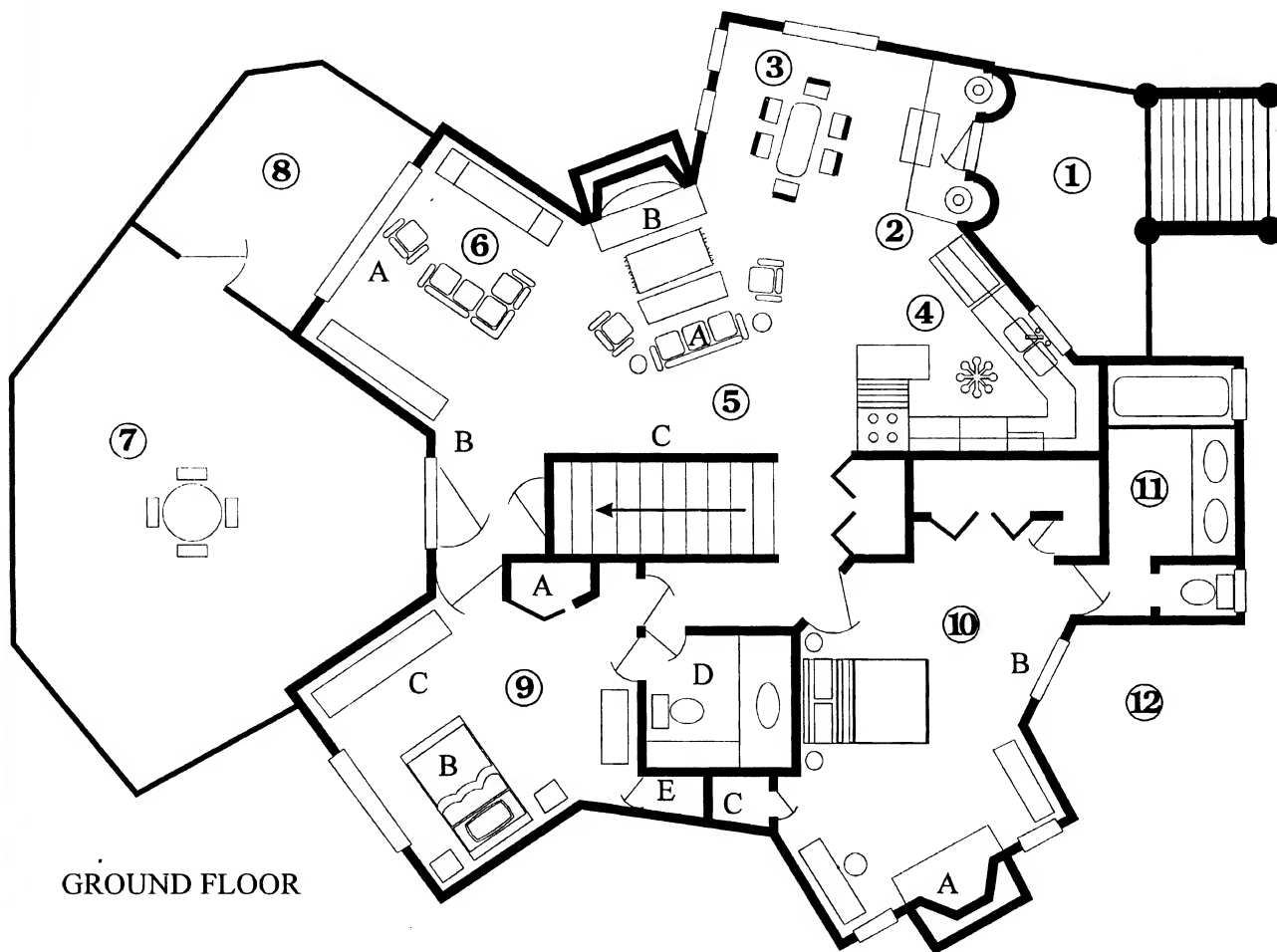
Knocking At The Front Door

If they go up to the front door and knock (or ring the doorbell), Arthur will eventually answer it. However, you should let them wait for a minute or two, so they can take the opportunity to look at the statues and peer through the windows at the interior of the manor. Saxon will continue to bark and growl at them, unless they have managed to shoo him away somehow.

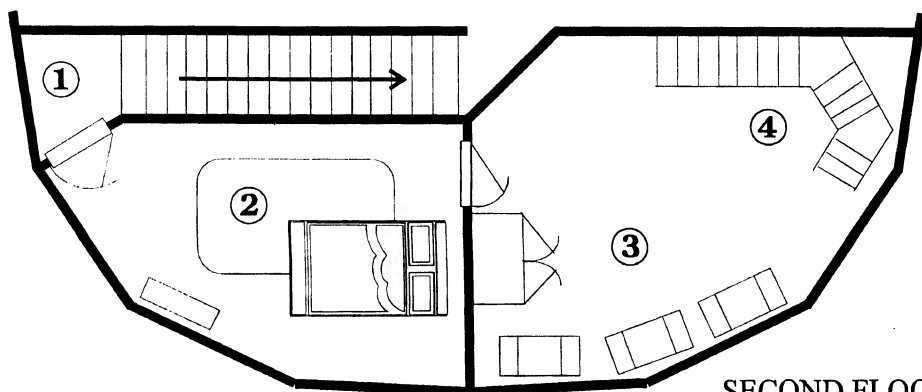
After a slight delay, Arthur will answer the door dressed in the most garish clothes the PCs have ever seen. He is wearing a pair of bright green and yellow plaid pants, a red and white striped shirt, and a pair of brown loafers (with no socks, of course!). His dark brown hair is unkempt, and hangs in curly locks which frame his pale, aquiline face. With a sparkle in his eye, he opens the door and smiles expansively as he asks, "Yo! Whazzup?" If someone asks for his identity, he will say his name is Arthur Duncan. He can offer no proof of this claim if he is challenged, for he has none — the identity is assumed, and is taken from the original resident's name.

The characters will note that he seems incredibly eccentric, and the colorful phrases littering his dialog are drawn from a wide range of common slang and colloquialisms used over the past thirty years. Depending on how insistent they are, Arthur will sooner or later invite the "dudes" inside so they can all "do lunch". He will give them only a limited tour, consisting of the northern half of this floor. Apologizing profusely, he explains that he can't show them any more, "cause the rest of the pad is like, thrashed, man."

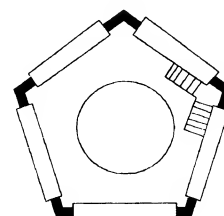
There is food in the freezer and the bar is well-stocked (see area 4), so the PCs shouldn't have gotten too far before a loud crack of lightning is heard outside — immediately followed by the deafening boom of thunder. What was clear skies and fair weather has suddenly turned into a dark, rainy afternoon. Arthur will begin to glance uncomfortably at his watch at regular intervals. The rain quickly turns to hail, and the



GROUND FLOOR

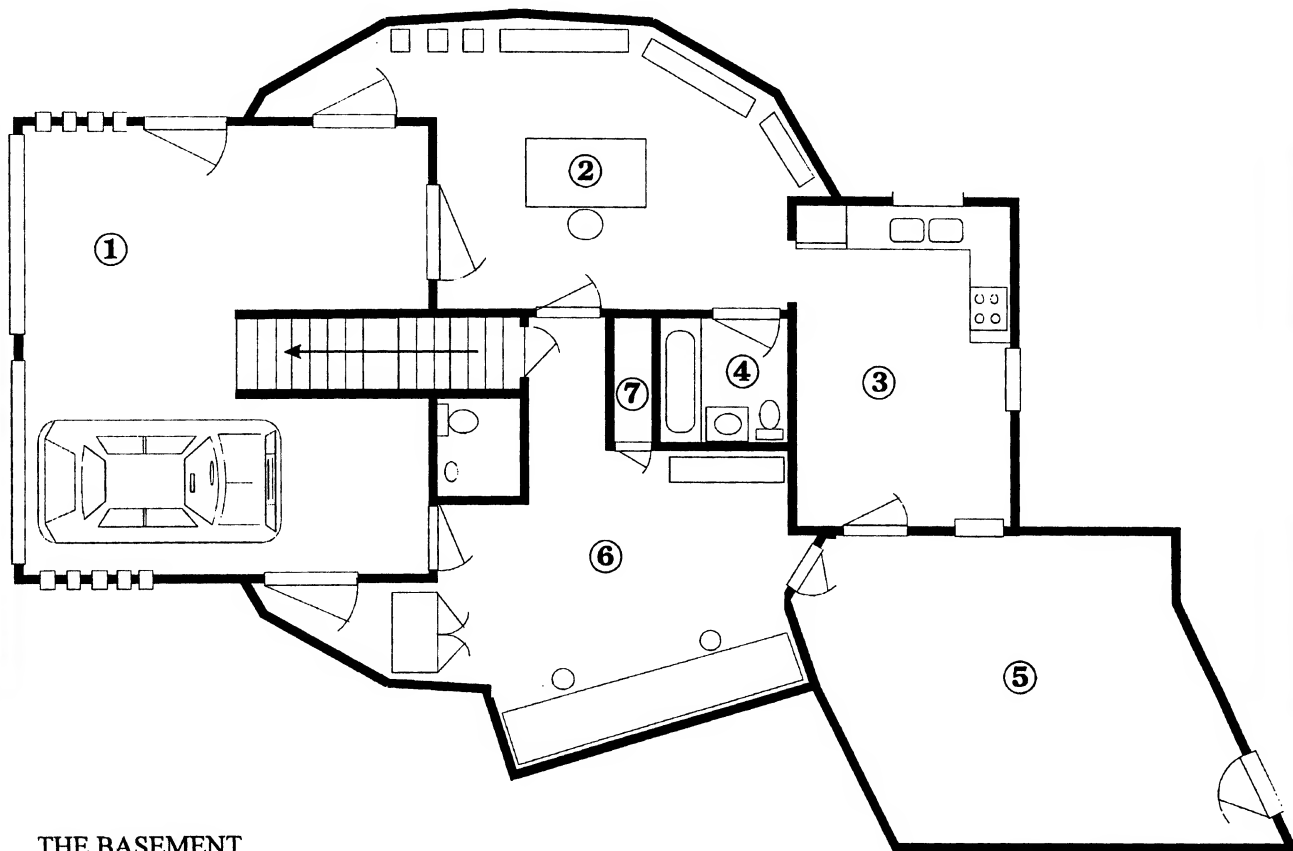


SECOND FLOOR

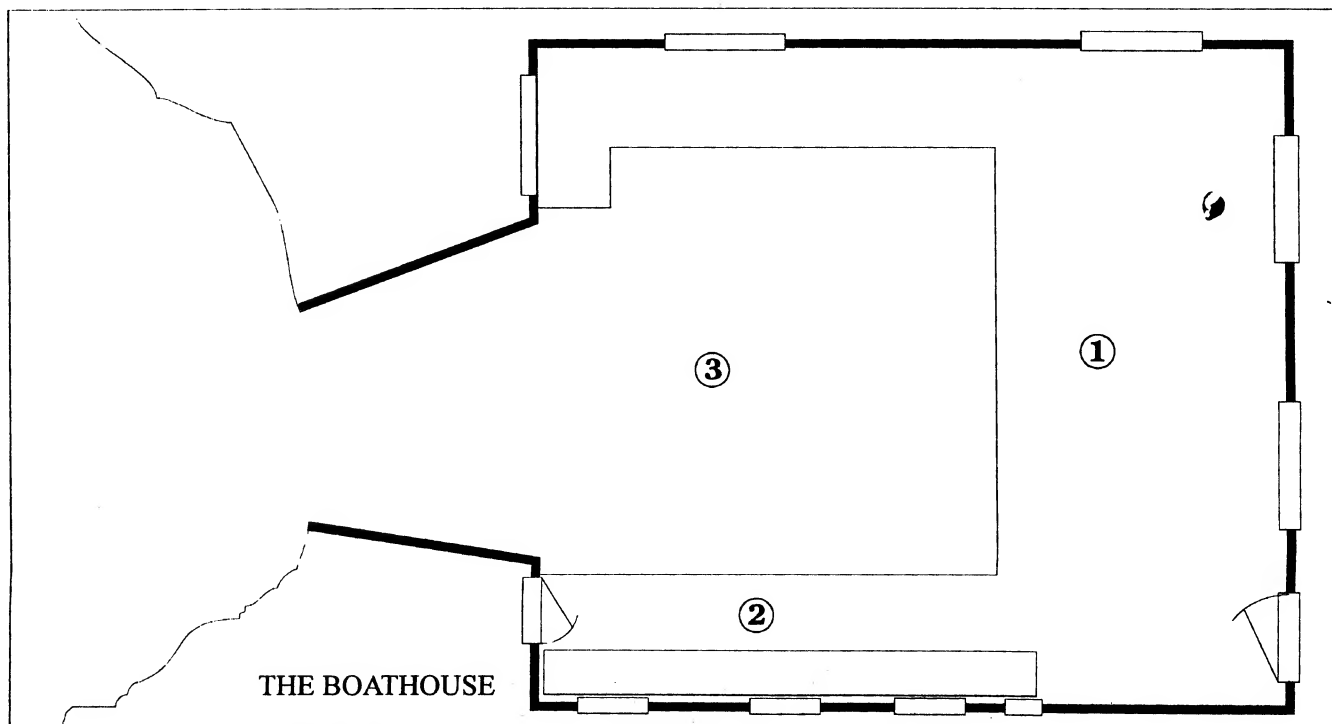


THE
BELL TOWER

Maps by E. Ken Cox



THE BASEMENT



THE BOATHOUSE

wind grows more fierce by the moment. A second bolt of lightning strikes a tree across the road, and it bursts into flame. Ignoring the nearby fire, Arthur stares at his watch, counting...

At the precise moment that the third stroke of lightning hits, something strange happens. All lights and electrical devices in the manor come on, including the wide screen television set in the den (area 6). Each character's attention should be drawn to the screen as they hear the blood-curdling scream of a woman being menaced by the monster in a low budget horror film. As soon as one of the party reacts, the gruesome creature will pause and look at that person as if it could see into the manor. And indeed it can, for the next thing the party knows, it has stepped through the television into the room!

Arthur will help the PCs fight the abomination, until it is killed or retreats back into the television (possibly taking one of its victims along!). Any wounded PCs will be stabilized by an unidentifiable hand-held device wielded by the android, then taken to one of the bedrooms (areas 10 & 11).

The GM should insert an (approximately) man-sized monster of his or her choice here, observing the following relative guidelines:

The Television Monster

Size: medium

Speed: fast

Damage potential: medium

Damage inflicted: 4-6 attacks at 1D6 ea.

This encounter shouldn't be too perilous, but should instead give the PCs an idea of what they are in for. If you'd like, substitute 4 to 6 small, gremlin-sized critters, that are easier to kill, but harder to catch. One or two of these should get away, subsequently running loose within the manor.

Sneaking Around Outside

Allow the party to wander around and investigate for about five minutes of game time before announcing that the PCs notice it has begun to rain heavily. Once they are aware of the rain, they will also see that the sky has begun to turn very dark, and the wind has suddenly picked up. At this point, it becomes obvious they will need to find shelter soon, for within moments after the rain starts, a bolt of lightning strikes in the nearby woods. The wind is soon filled with violent gusts, and a minute later, a tree across the road is struck by a second bolt of lightning and ignites.

The group is likely to be at one of three locations when this happens: The front of the house (either at the front door or near the exterior door to the greenhouse); behind the house near the garage and back porch; or down by the boathouse.

The locked greenhouse door opens to reveal a 15' drop, and anyone foolish enough to charge the door will fall headlong into the rose bushes below. The front door is also locked, but PCs on the porch may look inside (read Ground Floor areas 1 and 2 to the players). No one is visible inside, but knocking on the door or ringing the door bell will fetch Arthur within one or two minutes; go to the section entitled **Knocking at the front door**.

All entrances to the garage are locked tight, and the stairs in the back are even more dangerous in the rain (see Ground Floor, area 8 for details). Characters may try to break in here, and if an attempt to do so is successful, go to the section labeled **Breaking In or Entering Without Invitation**.

The boathouse is not a good place to take shelter, for as the third bolt of lightning strikes, an aquatic monster comes through the gate into the water of the boat pit.

The GM should insert an aquatic monster of his/her choice in the boathouse, observing the following relative guidelines:

The Boathouse Monster

Size: large to huge

Speed: average

Damage potential: heavy

Damage inflicted: 6-12 attacks at 2D6 ea.

Breaking In or Entering Without Invitation

Arthur will intercept them within five to ten minutes, and lead them back to the northern section of the first floor. At this point, you should proceed with the story as in **Knocking At The Front Door**, above.

Scenario Notes

General Notes Regarding The Manor: Unless otherwise noted, lighting in each area is provided by a combination of natural light and normal fluorescent/incandescent bulbs. Normal 120 volt power is available in each room, with wall outlets spaced at 6 foot intervals. 240 volts is available in the laundry closet next to the kitchen. Items taken from the house will

operate if plugged into extension cords located in the workshop (Basement area 6).

The GM may chose to place gates at any location within the manor. If this is the case, curious PCs are likely to encounter gates by looking under rugs, behind mirrors, out windows, etc.

If any floorboards or tiles are removed, they will regenerate within four hours. The same is true of walls and ceilings. Mirrors and windows within the manor are another matter entirely. These are potential problems, since any of these may (at the gamemaster's option) function as a gate if broken. Such gates are to be handled at the GM's discretion regarding destination, direction, etc. If the gamemaster so desires, breaking a window or mirror may result in an encounter with one or more monsters of his or her choice.

Notes Regarding The Gates. All gates within the manor operate independently of each other, and have been provided with specific guidelines regarding their method of creation, and operational attributes such as their duration, activators, and destinations. However, you as gamemaster should feel free to change or delete any gate whose pre-assigned statistics do not fit your individual campaign. Simply refer to the information given below and adjust accordingly:

Method of creation:

- Naturally occurring due to the manor's physical proximity to a nexus point,
- Specifically created by some being utilizing magic or technology,
- Formed spontaneously as a result of a temporal flux.

Operational attributes:

- Duration — Permanent or temporary (may last for seconds, minutes, or days),
- Activation — Timed repetition or triggered by an event,
- Direction — Unidirectional or bidirectional travel possible,
- Destination — Linked to a fixed, variable or completely random location.

Timed & triggered activators:

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Annually
- Moon Phases (waning, waxing, new, or full)
- Solstices/Equinoxes (winter, summer, spring, fall)
- Transition Times *

*Transition times include the following specific times or weather-related events: Dusk, dawn, noon, midnight, mist, dew, fog, clouds, rain, storms, eclipses, lightning, blizzards, earthquakes, floods, droughts, and the 6th day of the new moon.

Exterior Description

The building itself has five wings radiating from a large central area that is topped by a geodesic dome and small bell tower. The driveway runs along the north side of the manor and curves behind the back of the house to the garage. The front door and porch are part of the northeast wing. A large greenhouse is attached between the southeast and south wings, and extends southeast.

The driveway continues west past the two-car garage for approximately 50 yards. It ends at a boathouse situated on a small, isolated cove. There is a large, overgrown yard ringed by tall pine trees between the manor and the lake/boathouse.

Interior Description

Manor House — Ground Floor

1. Front Porch. The concrete path ends in a flight of steps that lead up to the small front porch. To either side of the doorway are round, corbelled window turrets, providing a display area for the two statues inside them. Above the doorway is a hanging light with a large polyhedral cover made of amber-colored glass.

GM Note: Close examination will show the amber cover contains 20 sides, the face of each bearing a unique, unidentifiable rune. (Actually, PCs with knowledge of history or the occult will recognize them as Norse runes, though they have no purpose other than for decoration.)

Characters may see into the house from the porch, since there are no curtains on either of the display turrets, and neither is shielded from behind. Such PCs will be afforded a somewhat restricted view of the Foyer, Dining Room, and Stairway up. Anyone attempting to peek inside must first get to the porch, which means getting past the dog, Saxon. Note that violence against the noisy little mutt will be noticed by Arthur's keen senses, whether it is the report of a pistol, or the shrill "yiiiiipe, yiiiipe, yiiiipe!" made by the dog if he is struck or threatened in any fashion.

2. Foyer. The main entrance to the manor is through a small foyer attached to the dining room (area 3). The foyer is a shallow, carpeted area, three feet deep by six feet wide. The floor here is sunken in relation to the room beyond, being level with the front porch outside. There are a pair of short steps leading up, directly in front of the door. The bottom step protrudes into the foyer only slightly, but enough to prevent the front door from opening fully. The entire section is carpeted in tan shag.

Within the window turrets on either side of the doorway stand life-size statues made of light gray stone. They are finely-carved in a romanesque style, and depict a male and a female. The male (located directly north of the door) is satyr-like, with furry loins, cloven hooves, and a rack of deer antlers springing from his forehead. He has a naked sword slung over his back and holds a large flute in one hand. His bearded face is framed by thick curly hair, and he stares out at the front doorstep with a wry, mischievous grin.

The buxom, big-hipped human female is draped in a revealing toga, strategically placed to cover only the most private areas of her well-endowed figure. Her head is crowned with a garland of flowers, and long, flowing hair drapes over her shoulders and breasts. In a sash tied around her thin waist is a sheathed dagger. She holds a small lyre in her right hand. The delicate fingers of her other hand trail from a small crescent pendant that hangs at the base of her throat. The look on her face is one of languid passion, as she gazes out through the window into the yard beyond.

3. Northeast Wing: Dining Room.

The floor is covered by pale blue and gray tiles containing a complex geometric pattern. A large table surrounded by six chairs are the only items of furniture here. The walls are painted in gradient shades of blue that change from pastel at the baseboards to a deep indigo at the ceiling. The ceiling is also indigo, giving an impression of a darkened night sky. Suspended from the center of the ceiling is a spherical white light fixture that almost seems to be a small sun, given the decor of the room. A large picture window on the northeast wall is covered by pastel blue miniblinds, and has curtains pulled back on either side. The view from the window overlooks the driveway.

Two paintings hang side by side on the northwest wall. The first is a futuristic cityscape, over which hangs large twin moons. The second work is of a space sta-

tion, its round central core linked by spoked connectors to two overlapping rings that circle the main structure. Attached to several of the docking bays spaced around the rings are spacecraft of various sizes and designs. In the distance is a distorted, abnormal area of space surrounded by whirling clouds. Science fiction fans will recognize this to be a wormhole. A tiny spaceship is barely visible as it streaks from the hole.

GM Note: If the ceiling is examined closely, the observer will notice that it contains many small points of light. At night, when the lights are off, they actually twinkle, and the scenes depicted in the paintings appear real (i.e., the suns and stars give off a faint light). Also, if the painting of the space station is examined periodically, things change. The ship docks at the station, the wormhole closes, the station rotates, etc.

Gate: The window. If the blinds are fully retracted at night, and the window is opened, PCs may step through to the space station depicted in the second painting, described above. This is a timed gate, and is only active at night.

4. Kitchen. Oddly-shaped counter tops nearly enclose this area, though the counters, range, grill and end cabinet are only three feet high. This allows line of sight vision to and from all interior areas in the northern half of the house. A low ceiling fan spins above the middle of the room, its whirling blades providing very little clearance.

Along the wall, clockwise from northeast, are: a refrigerator, sink, dishwasher, microwave, oven, range, grill, and liquor cabinet. Built-in cabinets run above the counters from the refrigerator to the range. There is a window above the sink overlooking the front porch.

The refrigerator contains neatly arranged rows of beverage cans, with several unopened bottles and jars of condiments. The freezer is amply stocked with a selection of frozen, microwaveable dinners.

The cabinets and cupboards contain all the items one might expect to find in a kitchen. There are pots, pans, dishes, glasses, cups, silverware, and the like. A small pantry cabinet holds spices, flour, sugar, and coffee. Below the sink are a collection of kitchen cleaning supplies, such as scouring pads, dishwasher detergent, sponges, etc. Finally, the liquor cabinet is well-stocked with a variety of liquor, liqueurs, wines and brandies, plus the typical mixers.

GM Note: The metal-tipped blades of the ceiling fan are only 6 feet above the floor. Fortunately, these blades are not sharp, but will nonetheless do 1D6 points of blunt damage to anyone struck by them.

Perceptive PCs will notice that there are no perishables (such as milk, fruit, or meat) inside the refrigerator. In fact, some of the frozen food items are brands that are no longer sold. The food is still good, it has just been in the freezer for a long time.

All appliances in the kitchen function in a normal fashion, though it may be noticed that the refrigerator is very cold inside, or the oven heats up rapidly, etc. Nothing will seem too unusual until someone thinks to check the wall outlets or examine the appliances themselves. At this point, anyone doing so will notice that the electrical cords for each appliance (including the refrigerator) are neatly coiled behind them. Their power comes from MIOPIC, and is distributed via a wireless power grid. If they are removed from this room or the summer kitchen (Basement — area 3), they will not function at all.

5. Main Room. This large room is located in the northern hemisphere of the building's geodesic dome. The vaulted ceiling rises from stained wood walls at the ground level to the segmented interior of the dome's white ceiling. Three triangular skylights admit natural light and provide a view of the sky above. The pale wood parquet floor contains alternating snowflake, circle, and web designs.

The room itself is sparsely furnished, with a long couch complemented by an end table and chair on either side. Placed in front of the couch is large coffee table. A thick rug lies on the floor between the furniture and the hearth.

5a. Chandelier. In the center of the room hangs a large bronze chandelier. Surrounding three bulbs with a clear glass globe are trapezoidal bronze plates oriented in a vertical pattern. The tops of the plates widen to connect in a web-like pattern. The plates extend downward into a series of points. The construction of the chandelier, coupled with its obvious weight should give any attentive PCs a great feeling of foreboding, especially if they are seated on the couch, which occupies the space directly beneath the chandelier.

GM Note: A close examination of the chandelier reveals that three of the plates are lighter in color than the others.

5b. Fireplace. In the middle of the segmented north wall is a brick fireplace. Beside the fireplace, the white walls are recessed, and wooden web-like latticework stretches over the top and sides of the area.

5c. Stairs Up. A narrow flight of stairs on the southern wall ascend west to the upper section of the dome. There is a hallway between the foot of the stairs and the kitchen. Across from the stairs is a pair of folding doors (closed).

GM Note: Behind the doors are a washer and a dryer.

Gate: The fireplace. A timed, created gate.

For three consecutive nights each year, the full moon is oriented above the building such that its light shines directly upon the chandelier. During these nights, which take place during midwinter, the moonbeams reflect off each plate sequentially, eventually focusing into one narrow beam. The light is thus directed through the center of the web-like lattice onto the fireplace for 3 minutes each night. When this event occurs, a gate is opened to another dimension. Anyone stepping upon the hearth is immediately transported there. The exact destination is up to the GM, but it is suggested that anyone stepping through emerge upon the hearth of the same fireplace in a parallel world. Such a place could be a mirror world or one where history is not quite the same . . .

6. Northwest Wing: Living Room

The dark brown carpet and panelling here lend a somber quality to the room and its contents. A corner group and a leather recliner face a wide-screen TV and elaborate stereo system located against the northeast wall. The electronics are all state of the art equipment. The impressive collection includes a videocassette recorder, a laserdisk player, an AM/FM receiver and amplifier, CD player, cassette deck, audio equalizer, and a pair of huge speakers.

Against the southwest wall is a large (10'wide x 6'tall) bookcase that contains the manor's audio and video library. There is an amazing selection of music and videos, representing a variety of tastes. South of the room is a short hallway, flanked by two doors, both of which are closed.

6a. Sliding Glass Door. Closed vertical blinds cover a sliding glass door in the center of the northwest wall. This door leads out to the sun-bleached rear deck and exterior stairs down.

GM Note: Even the most cursory examination of the door shows that the lock mechanism is permanent, effectively sealing the door. For further information, see the boxed text below.

6b. Porch. The multi-paned west door opens out onto the screened porch.

6c. Stairs Down. The eastern door opens into the narrow hall. Behind it is an interior stairway descending to another closed door at the bottom.

GM Note: Anyone who thinks to look behind the entertainment system will immediately notice that none of the electronics components are interconnected or plugged in to a wall outlet. However, all have neatly coiled wires connected to the various input/output and antenna jacks. Despite this, the digital clocks register the correct time, and everything functions as normal.

The doors to b and c are always shut. If left open by anyone passing through, they will slam closed after a few seconds, due to air pressure. Note that there is no lighting on the stairway; and the low knob on the bottom door is awkward to open as there is not a landing.

Gate: Sliding glass door. A triggered, created gate to a Horror genre of the GM's choice. If the seal is broken and the door is opened, the gate will be triggered. The gate will also be triggered should the PCs break the glass. In the latter case, the portal will be opened until Arthur can close it with one of his devices. This will require 1D6 combat turns, during which there is a 10% cumulative chance per turn of something noticing the gate and coming through to investigate...

Gate: Wide screen TV. A random, spontaneous gate to a location of the game master's choosing (as depicted in the movie currently playing).

7. Screened Porch. Dark green indoor/outdoor carpet covers the floor here. The three walls where the porch connects to the house are wood, and all exterior walls are constructed of wood frame, screened floor to ceiling. This provides a panoramic view of everything on the west side of the manor, including the tree-lined backyard, the lake, and the boathouse. Four padded chairs are arranged around a large, round glass-topped table, and three matching chaise lounges face westward.

GM Note: Close inspection of the carpet will reveal that it bears three alternating geometric patterns: a circle, a triangle, and a triangle within a circle. Should anyone check for such, they may confirm that the chairs are placed at the four major compass points.

8. Rear Deck and Stairs. The deck and stairs are constructed of sun-bleached pine, and show the unmistakable signs of exposure to the elements. Some of the boards are cracked, some are warped (and some are both). It is obvious that this area

is unused and is very much in need of repair. Neither look to be safe.

The deck itself is 15' above the concrete driveway, and there is a small landing 10' above where the stairs follow an extreme angle backward toward the garage. This stairway appears very dangerous, and should be used with extreme caution.

GM Note: The stairs that lead down to the garage and backyard are steep and rickety, and cut back at an extreme angle. Even worse is the uneven nature of the steps — both width and spacing. They are so bad that there is a 75% chance anyone not paying absolute attention will misstep and fall the rest of the way down. The railing is poorly attached, and there is a 90% chance that a character will fall over the side if they lean on it. Any characters who fall will suffer 1D6 points of blunt damage for every five foot distance to the ground. It goes without saying that they are best avoided entirely by any characters who are intoxicated (as such PCs have a 99% chance of falling).

9. Southwest Wing: Guest Bedroom. This room is filled with odd angles and corners, especially near the ceiling. Dominating the southwest wall is a large picture window with curved valance. The window is decorated with sheer curtains and thick drapes, with the latter pulled back to show the corner of the yard and the trees south of the manor. The walls and furnishings in this room are decorated in shades of blue and green. The carpet here is a dark grey plush.

9a. Closet. There are two doors on the north wall, located on either side of a small, oddly-shaped closet-like space. Behind the accordion-type doors is a typical closet. Inside, dozens of empty coathangers are suspended from a clothes rod. On a shelf above the hangers are several spare sheets and blankets, and a pair of extra pillows.

9b. Bed and Nightstands. A queen-size bed rests against the southeast wall, and there is a small nightstand with a lamp on either side.

9c. Bookcase. A bookcase (6' tall x 6' wide) on the northwest wall holds an eclectic combination of books — classics, westerns, science fiction, contemporary novels, along with a smattering of extremely technical manuals (on electronics theory) and books on mysticism and the occult.

9d. Bathroom. There is a small bathroom in southeast, with doors that open out into this room and the hallway between this room and area 10. Above the double basins

of the sink is a mirror that is covered by a thick plastic laminate of some type.

9e. Closet. In the southwest corner next to the bathroom is a tiny, irregularly-shaped closet. Opening reveals the interior of a large tepee. Inside is an ancient, wrinkled man dressed in the garb of a Native American. He appears to be blind.

GM Note: Once again, anyone inspecting the lamps or outlets behind the nightstands will notice that the power cords are unplugged and wound neatly in a coil. The lamps function normally, whether or not they are unplugged. Experimentation will show, however, that the lamps will stay on even when removed from the room. This enables characters to have a portable light source, as long as the lamps are within the house.

The material covering the bathroom mirror is capable of absorbing a great deal of shock, and serves to deter breaking of the mirror. Only a concerted effort on the part of a character will cause the mirror to crack. If this happens, a gate will immediately open to another dimension, as detailed elsewhere in the General Notes section.

Gate: Picture Window. A permanent, natural gate leading to a location of the GM's choosing.

Gate: Southeast Closet. A permanent, created gate to a pocket dimension. For more information, see the section entitled "Cowboys & Indians".

10. South Wing: Master Bedroom. The master bedroom is carpeted with dark gray plush and is decorated in a burgundy color scheme throughout. The furniture here is made of wood, stained a dark cherry. Although the room is relatively large, the walls are irregular and angled too frequently to allow for more than a few furnishings.

The most predominant item is the king size bed against the west wall. Beside it are nightstands north and south, and on each of these is a lamp. Near the westernmost window is a desk and chair. A chest of drawers stands against the east wall near the exterior windows.

10a. Fireplace. In the middle of the south wall is a fireplace, flanked by windows. It is a normal fireplace, and contains three new logs.

10b. Window. A window in southeast wall overlooks the arboretum (area 12). There are switchplates on either side of the window. Characters who experiment with these will find that the one on the right turns on a set of floodlights in the arbore-

tum; the one on the left doesn't appear to do anything (GM see below).

10c. Closet. In the southwest corner is a door, obviously leading to another small closet. However, anyone opening the door sees the inside of a general store right out of the wild west era. Inside is a clerk, busily checking his stock.

Gate: Southeast Window. A triggered, created gate overlooking a moat, beyond which lies fields and hills. Climbing out places PCs in this medieval setting. On this side, the window is set in the tower of a castle owned by Duncan.

The switch on the left side operates the gate. However, this switch does nothing unless the corresponding switch is also on. The other switch is directly beneath this one, by the door in the basement workshop (Basement area 6). It opens a gate there also, but only if the switch in this room is on. If they are turned on simultaneously, both gates will activate.

Gate: Southwest Closet. A permanent, created gate to a pocket dimension, detailed later under the section entitled "Cowboys & Indians".

11. Southeast Wing: Master Bathroom. This luxurious bathroom is decorated with high-gloss black counters and basins with polished silver fixtures. These are tastefully offset by white, gold-veined faux-marble walls. Each of the white floor tiles contains a delicate silver pentagram. Beside the door is a standard toilet.

Along the southeast wall is a double vanity. The knobs on each sink turns the flow of water off and on at the other basin. Other than that, it is normal.

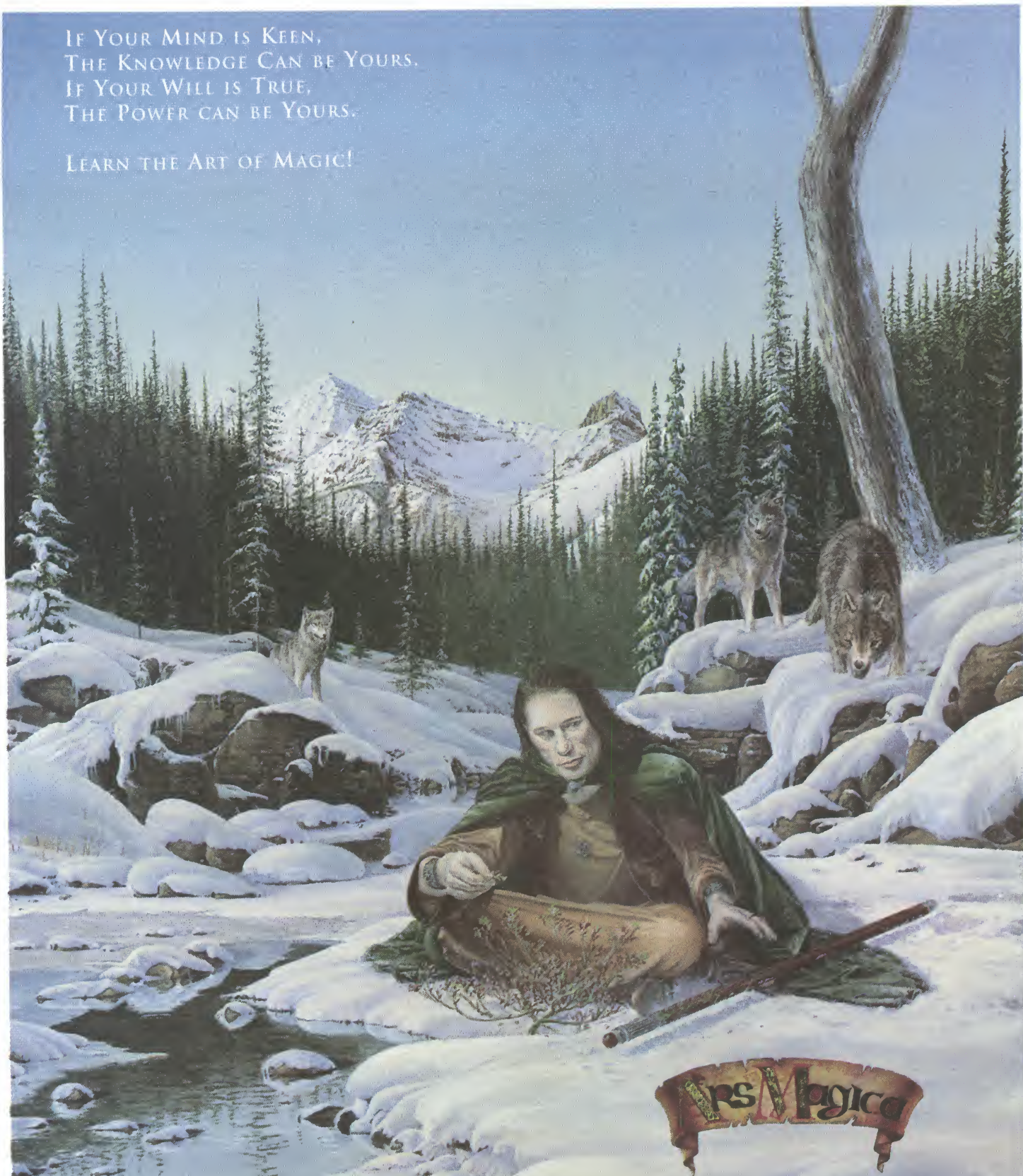
There is an oversized tub in the northernmost end of the room. It appears to function normally, though the water from the tap looks slightly cloudy. Anyone testing the water from the tub will find that it is salt water.

12. Arboretum/Greenhouse. This room is two stories high, with the floor at the basement level below. The upper walls and roof are made of a translucent material, similar to (but stronger than) hard plastic. This material is affixed at ground level to the top of a 15' tall containing wall of concrete that extends downward and surrounds the area at the basement level. There is a thick hardwood door in the northeast corner opening inward from the front yard at the top of the wall (i.e. at ground level).

GM Note: According to the original design, a flight of stairs were to provide access to the greenhouse below. However, for some reason they were never installed. Consequently, anyone attempting to pick the lock and enter through

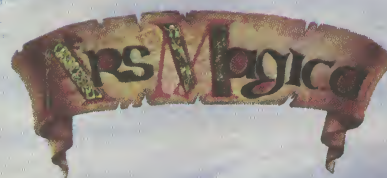
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this door faces a fifteen foot drop into the thorny rose bushes below.

Manor House — Second Floor

1. Stairs Down. These stairs overlook the main room below (area 5). A doorway at the top opens into the upstairs bedroom (area 2).

2. Bedroom. Natural light filters in through the translucent panes of a large triangular skylight set in the geodesic dome's ceiling. There is a full size bed on the east wall, and a dresser with a small lamp against the west wall. There is another door on the east wall beside the bed. Anyone attempting to open this door will find that it is locked.

In the middle of the floor is a large oriental rug. The design of the rug contains a pronounced weblike pattern, very similar to the latticework above the downstairs fireplace (area 5).

Gate: Trap Door. (beneath the rug). A random, spontaneous gate leads down to a fallout shelter in a post-nuclear era dimension.

3. Supply Room. Another translucent skylight in the dome's ceiling (like the one found in area 1, above) allows daylight to penetrate this room. A trio of large, locked chests are placed against the south wall, and a tall antique armoire stands against the west wall next to the door.

GM Note: This room functions primarily as storage space. It contains all the mystical effects that would be needed to conduct a transition ritual, such as incense, crystals, candles, chalices, etc. These items are stored in the chests. The armoire contains a variety of clothing, weapons, miscellaneous equipment, and supplies. In a small strong box (secured with a padlock) in the bottom of the armoire is an assortment of currency from many of the worlds adjoining the manor.

4. Stairway Up. Because the triangular sections of the geodesic dome are becoming more horizontal the further up the unevenly curved stairs you get, the less headroom there is. An unnatural, pulsing red light can be seen coming from above, through the gaps around the door frame at the top of the stairs.

Manor House — Bell Tower

This small chamber is unlit except for the pulsing beam of light emanating from the center of the room. Interior shutters cover the windows on each of the walls in

this five-sided room. As the first person emerges from the stairway, a thick crackling sound draws the PC's attention to the multitude of dead insect husks littering the floor. But the most amazing feature of the place is what appears to be a bizarre machine of some sort, sitting in the center of the room. A tall, thin rod extends up from the center of the device, and at the top is the source of the hypnotic crimson ray.

Sitting inside an inscribed pentacle, this weird apparatus is covered with numerous glyphs and strange protrusions that could be buttons and knobs. While there are many wires and cables connecting the exterior components of the device, there are no cables visibly connecting it to anything else. Along one side of the device, a large open-sided mounting platform holds the following: one car battery, four lantern batteries, and twelve "D" size batteries. A plate securing the top of this unlikely battery pack is labelled **Danger - High Voltage!**

The pentagram is outlined by the throbbing red glow that rapidly traces the perimeter of the magic boundary. This has the effect of surrounding the device with a laser beam, pulsing at 60 Hz.

GM Note: This is the MIOPIC Device, the weird, half-magic/half technological construct which regulates the functions of the house and the gates. The device is able to supply electricity to specific items within the house without connectors or cables. It also generates additional 240 volt power, and supplies emergency electricity to the house in case of natural disaster or power outage.

Anyone brave (or stupid) enough to open the shutters will be appalled by the sights which greet them from beyond. Although each window should be different, there should be one common point regarding the views from these windows/portals. Pick the most horrid tableau imaginable, and describe it to the PCs in gruesome detail. Any one of these should be a blood-curdling view into their worst nightmare — an endless field of fire, a desolate plain of black, barren ground, or whatever you think would strike terror into the hearts of the characters. If they even think about going through these natural, permanent gates, kill one. This should change the other PCs' minds.

Gate: Five surrounding windows. Permanent, natural gates. The MIOPIC device is placed at the primary nexus point linking this world to five separate dimensions.

There is nothing worthwhile in any of these adjoining dimensions, and most of the environments are toxic to humans. The only use-

ful aspect of these adjoining dimensions is the metaphysical energies they emanate, for this is what enables MIOPIC's powers.

Manor House — Basement

The basement of the manor is lit in several places by fluorescent bulbs in the ceiling. Natural light is scarce, because many of the windows have been replaced by an opaque plasticine substance limiting sight and access.

1. Garage. This area is a 24' x 21' two-car garage. The floor here is made of concrete, and the walls are constructed of cinder blocks with translucent glass block windows on the northeast and southwest walls. A locked metal door on the northeast wall exits beneath the rear deck.

There are a pair of remote-control operated overhead doors (9' wide) providing access to the twin parking areas. A four door compact, completely covered by a thick layer of dust, sits in one of these. A set of keys are in the ignition.

In the middle of the back wall is a three foot wide, angled projection that runs from the floor (at the wall) to the ceiling of the garage (about 8 feet from the wall). This is at first glance, presumably, the bottom of a stairwell up to the ground floor. On either side of this are locked, metal doors opening from the interior of the manor.

Gate: Door in the base of stairs. A permanent, created gate. There is a handle in the middle of the projection. When pulled, a visible seam forms on the under-surface of the structure, and a five foot trap door pulls down, leading up. This is a permanent, created gate to a cyberpunk setting.

2. Recreation Room. There are no windows in this room to allow the entry of natural light. Three seven-foot tall bookcases are installed along the segmented curve of the north wall at the dome's footing. The bookshelves contain a treasure trove of technical manuals relating to electrical wiring, electronics, radio, computers, construction, and architecture. There is also an entire section devoted to obscure volumes of metaphysical research and lore. Placed in the dead space in the northwest corner are three six-foot tall metal file cabinets. All of these are locked.

Under the central fluorescent ceiling light is a large (6' wide x 4' long) drafting table with a stool. Behind it, against the south wall, is a cabinet with an assortment of drafting supplies — pencils, pens, erasers, ink, templates, etc.

There are four doors in the room. On the west wall is a metal door (locked, leads to the garage, area 1). Next to it, on the south wall, a wooden door (to the stairway up, a short hall, area 6). Behind the open third door is a bathroom (area 4). The fourth door is all but hidden until one of the PCs searches the northwest corner. It appears to lead to the garage (GM see below). Beyond an open arch to the east is the summer kitchen (area 3).

GM Note: An inspection of the contents within the locked file cabinets will reveal a collection of surveyor's maps of the surrounding area, floorplans of this and other houses, and numerous engineering drawings. Most of these contain handwritten annotations that make no sense, even to someone with engineering background.

Gate: Door. A permanent, created gate leading to Basement area 6.

3. Summer Kitchen. In the middle of the northeast wall is a sink, and an exterior window that provides a ground-level view of the area around the front porch. The window admits natural light, as does another exterior window to the southeast. On the south wall is a door, next to which is a window looking out into the greenhouse (area 5).

In the northeast corner, an open archway leads to the recreation room (area 2). Next to the archway is a refrigerator.

GM Note: Observant characters might note that the south window should be covered by stairs up to the ground level, if the stairs were there.

Like most of the electrically-powered appliances in the house, those in this area have neatly coiled power cords hidden behind them, and these appliances function inside the manor whether plugged in or not (see ground floor kitchen, area 4).

4. Bathroom. This very small, cramped bathroom is decorated in bright yellow pastels. It has a toilet and sink on the southern wall, and a tub along the western wall. There is nothing unusual here.

5. Arboretum/Greenhouse. This large, enclosed area is filled with rampant growth of all types of foliage. A fifteen foot tall containing wall surrounds the south and east perimeter. Anchored securely to the top of this wall is a thick, plastic-like translucent material. Dense rose and holly bushes line the outer walls, broken at intervals by large potted plants. A broad, ivy-covered

trellis stands against the west wall, in between flower boxes and hanging plants.

A small stone fountain with a statue of a happy cherub is located in the center of the area, about 10' from the door to area 6. Toward the south end of the arboretum is a twenty-five foot tall birch tree. Ringing the base of the tree is a stone bench resembling a miniature circle of standing stones.

The majority of the flora growing here is watered by an underground stream. The soil floor is covered with a thick carpet of grass, and there are stepping stones providing a path through the center of the greenhouse, as well as around the perimeter.

GM Note: PCs with the Botany (or similar) skill may note that the plants here are rare or unique, and some of them are unidentifiable.

At the extreme south end of the containing wall is a small (5' tall) wooden door, hidden by a thick hedge of holly. It may only be found if PCs state that they are actively searching behind the bushes. Behind the door is a root cellar.

Gate: Door in perimeter wall. A random, spontaneous gate to a pocket universe of the GM's choosing. When opened initially, the door reveals a root cellar. However, each time the door has been opened after the first time, there is a 75% chance that the gate will be triggered when the door is closed. When this happens, the PCs will hear a loud 'pop' from the other side of the gate.

6. Workshop. All of the windows along the south end of this room appear to have been covered by black spray paint (it is not spray paint, but a thick opaque polymer that prevents breaking). An overhead light provides most of the illumination besides the various task lights. Running the length of the south wall is a workbench with tools, equipment, appliances, and various scientific devices of undetermined nature. (Arthur's computer is also here.)

There is a locked metal door beside a tiny bathroom on the west wall. The bathroom contains only a toilet and sink, and the latter contains many dark stains. The metal door leads to the garage (area 1).

A short hallway leads north to a pair of doors on the west and north walls. Behind the western door is a flight of stairs leading up to the interior of the house at ground level. The northern door leads to area 2.

A door on the southeast wall opens in from the arboretum (area 5). There is a switchplate on either side of this door (for more information, see ground floor area 10b)

A door on the north wall opens from area 7. Beside it is another cabinet with tools and assorted hardware.

Blocking the unused dead space in the west corner is a large (8' tall) locker containing all electronics from those beings wandering through from other worlds. In the dead space behind the locker is a door.

GM Note: Among the information available on Arthur's computer is a list of all known gates in the manor, their frequency of operation, and where they lead (if known). There is also some information on Carlton Duncan, his notes, and floorplans for the place. Many of the notes are scanned, handwritten sheets that contain much indecipherable scrawl.

To access this information, the PCs will need to roll successfully against their Computer Science (or similar) skill. This should be a difficult roll, as the data is not only password protected, but encrypted as well.

Gate: Door to the greenhouse. A timed, created gate to a Fantasy genre, complete with standing stones, etc. Same as Duncan's Castle (see ground floor area 10); when activated, this door exits through the postern gate of the castle.

Gate: Door behind the locker. A permanent, created gate to Basement area 2.

7. Heat Pump. This small area has exterior doors on the west and south walls. Entry through the west door reveals a circuit breaker, water heater, and a mass of pipes and conduit snaking upward into the manor

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house. (Note that from inside, there is no southern door.)

PCs who open the south door will find themselves at the base of long, narrow shaft going up. It appears to be the bottom of an elevator shaft, and its smooth walls will prove virtually impossible to scale.

Gates: South Door. A timed, created gate that leads to another, alien dimension. At some point (in the middle of the night, perhaps), any PCs in area 6 will hear a 'thump', and upon checking, will find a dead alien body at the bottom of the shaft.

A second and third occurrence will develop a pattern over a period of days. After the appropriate time has passed, a new body will appear in the shaft. The only way to stop this from continuing is to somehow ascend the shaft and catch the murderer as a new body is about to be disposed of.

The Boathouse

Approximately 50 yards from the manor is a boathouse, situated in a private cove of a large recreational lake. This provides the manor occupants with access to the regional river system. The building is a single story, constructed of white stuccoed wood on a concrete slab. There are two exterior metal doors (both of which are locked). The windows are set in frames of glass block that allow additional natural light into the interior of the building. The roof is covered with dark gray asphalt shingles.

GM Note: If PCs come here first, they will be caught by the storm. On the third lightning bolt, an aquatic monster will emerge from the boat pit and attack the nearest character.

1. Utility Area. This section of the boathouse is cluttered with a variety of items. There are several cans of gasoline and motor oil, three 20' coils of normal rope, a gas-powered generator, miscellaneous boating and water skiing supplies (water skis, ski rope, etc).

2. Work Bench. A long, scarred and pitted work table runs nearly the length of the south wall. It is covered with an selection of scattered power tools and hardware. On the wall over the table hangs a series of pegboards with a wide assortment of tools.

3. Boat Pit. A beat up speedboat floats in the water, tied securely fore and aft. In boat are four life preservers and an empty styrofoam beverage cooler. The six seat cushions are capable of doubling as flotation devices.

Gate: Bottom of boat pit. A random, spontaneous gate to an aquatic location of the game master's choice.

About MIOPIC:

MIOPIC was created by Carlton Duncan as a means to harness and direct the metaphysical energy generated by the nexus of the various dimensions located at this site. This bizarre device appears almost comical, but its existence stabilizes the functioning of each of the gates throughout the manor. It is physically indestructible, and protects itself with a high-energy laser shield that constantly traces a path along a magically charged inscribed pentacle. As a failsafe, should the beam ever be disrupted, all five of the gates surrounding the device are designed to open momentarily, drawing any physical entity through to certain death. The one weakness of the device is through its computer-controlled override mechanism. This mechanism is accessible only through the execution of a heavily encrypted software program residing on the computer in the basement workshop (Basement area 6).

In addition to the stabilization it provides for the gates, the MIOPIC device supplies power to the many tools and appliances within the house. Such power is based on room location, and many items may not work if removed from a specific area (used common sense and your best judgement). In no event will any such device operate if removed from the house, unless on exten-

sion cords. This includes taking an item into a pocket dimension or through a gate.

Many of the rooms that have telephone lines also contain interfaces for computers (coaxial and RS-232C). MIOPIC serves as a satellite/cable receiver, and also provides the manor with its own central computer network, though there is no server or other networked computers in evidence (Arthur's computer is not part of MIOPIC, though it may be connected). This network may be used by the game master as desired, to allow access to a cybernetic network or outside computer services.

Cowboys & Indians

Ten Gallon Gulch and The Mesa of the Sky.

The pocket dimension accessed via the closets in areas 9 and 10 on the ground floor is the same. This pocket dimension was created by Carlton Duncan to serve as entertainment. All of the characters within this pocket dimension are simulated, and the scenario within is one straight out of the wild west era. Entering the scenario through the closet in area 9 places the characters in a Native American village and enables them to pass as members of a neighboring village. Conversely, entering through the closet in area 10 places them in the role of cowboys.

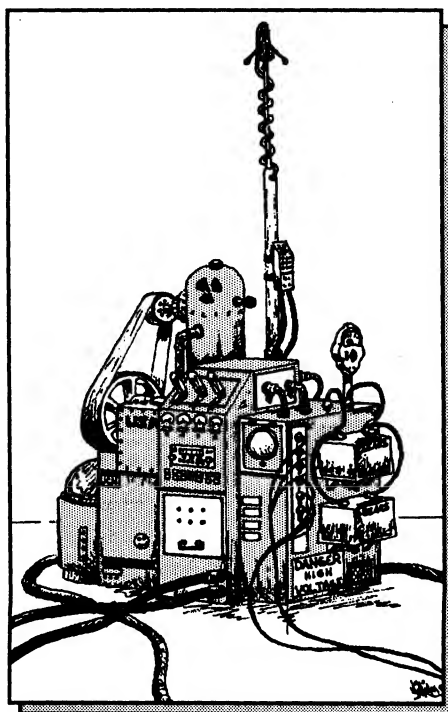
Those portraying Indians are recognized and treated as Native Americans by all the characters within the pocket dimension.

Those who participate as cowboys will be treated as though they were visitors from the cities to the east.

Obviously the PC's goals will differ, depending upon their method of entry. The Native Americans live a peaceful pastoral existence, one that has been shattered recently by the white man, specifically by a small group of murderous cowboys who dress in black hats. This has led the tribesmen to distrust and hate all white men.

The townsfolk, on the other hand, are faced with the daily task of survival, amidst the hash environs of the region. In addition to their relative isolation from the civilized lands of the East, the good people of Ten Gallon Gulch must cope with poor farming conditions, and the constant terrors of a group of bandits known as the "Black Hat Gang." These bandits are the same group that have been killing the Native Americans.

For the game purposes, the Black Hat Gang should consist of a group of skilled gunfighters whose numbers equal that of the PCs, plus and additional NPC who



MIOPIC DEVICE

serves as the bandits' leader. All bandits are skilled with their pistols and rifles, and can conduct combat while riding.

Non-Player Characters

Arthur (Android):

6'0", 175 lbs

Skills:

The following list of skills should give you an idea of Arthur's general abilities. Before beginning play, you might wish to assign appropriate values for each skill (based on the game system you will be using, of course). Optionally, you might decide to assign them as you need them — or even ignore them altogether, if that is your preferred method of play.

- Animal Training
- Boating
- Chemistry
- Communications Technology
- Computer Science
- Cybernetics
- Dodge & Parry
- Driving
- Electrical Engineering
- Electronics
- First Aid
- High Technology Use
- Laser Technology
- Mathematics
- Netrunning
- Physics, Force Field
- Physics, General
- Physics, Hyperdimensional
- Physics, Temporal
- Power Generation, various forms
- Stealth
- Weapon: Pistol, modern & energy
- Weapon: Rifle, modern & energy
- Xeno-Zoology

Cybernetics: As an android from the distant future, Arthur is fully equipped with the highest cybernetic technology available. For game purposes, consider all of his senses and physical abilities to be heightened to two or three times human maximum. Remember, his biggest weakness will be his difficulty in maintaining a proper social context when interacting with those native to this time period.

Notes: Arthur was placed here as an FTL operative to study and protect the MIOPIC device. This duty is perfectly suited to an android, since he will not age, and thus is able to remain at the site forever.

As soon as either Arthur or the characters are revealed as temporally aware, he will drop the facade and offer explanations as to who and what he is, and certain details of the manor. Until such time, he will present the image of a mere crackpot inventor. This is largely due to his inability to master this century's diverse cultures.

Arthur has the perceptive ability to detect the highly technical nature of the groups' equipment if they use it within 1/4 mile of the manor. Not only that, if they operate any of it while under his observation, he will be able to identify it immediately.

While Arthur is incredibly adept with technology and its trappings, he is unable to fathom the mystical underpinnings of the MIOPIC device. Although he can understand the significance of magic (and even recognize the materials, procedures, and timing involved), his absolutely logic-bound frame of reference prohibits him from actually performing it. Thus, he will welcome the assistance of anyone magically inclined.

He has been in residence at the manor for nearly six years. During this time, he has had ample opportunity to observe and note the frequency and timing of each gate's normal activity. However, Arthur's inability to properly perform even the simplest of magical rituals has kept him from opening or closing any of the gates on his own. He serves as an observer only, merely recording their activity and dealing with whatever chances to wander through while they are open.

Arthur can (if time allows) manufacture temporal tracers for members of the party. These devices facilitate safe return to (or nearly to) a preset point of origin. The tracers will be created only if the group chooses to join the FTL. Arthur also possesses a large number of alien devices which he has learned to operate. These are in addition to the equipment he brought with him from the future.

Arthur cannot swim, but he does know how to operate the speedboat, if necessary. He can also drive the car, but is not highly skilled.

Carlton Duncan:

Carlton Duncan is an amateur time traveler, electronics expert, and master practitioner of the occult. He found this place, and recognizing it for its multi-dimensional potential, decided to build the manor on the site. After designing MIOPIC, he created several gates and pocket dimensions. His activities alerted the FTL, but before they could stop him, he went through the gate to the fantasy realm (Basement area 6). With his magical powers enhanced by that dimension, he adopted the dimension as his new home. He rules there still, as lord of the castle.□

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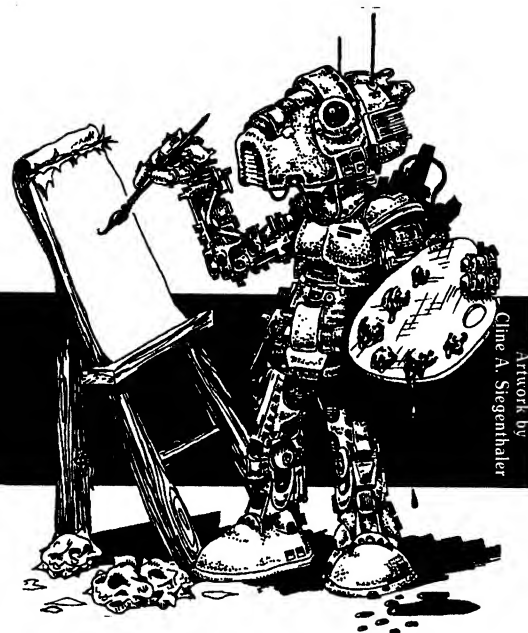
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Featured Artist: Anthony P. Szczudlo



Anthony graduated from the American Academy of Art in 1989. From there, he stippled his way into the commercial field working for a few Chicago agencies. He's been doing his distinctive fantasy art since 1990 and started freelancing for FASA in 1991. His first painting for publication was in 1992 for FASA's **Jade Falcon Sourcebook**. Hired as a full time illustrator for FASA in the fall of 1992, Tony's work can be found in **Shadowrun**, **MechWarrior** and more recently, **Earthdawn**. He has just been hired as a full-time artist with TSR.

Tony lives in Chicago with his wife, Connie, and his two daughters, Lauren and Samantha.

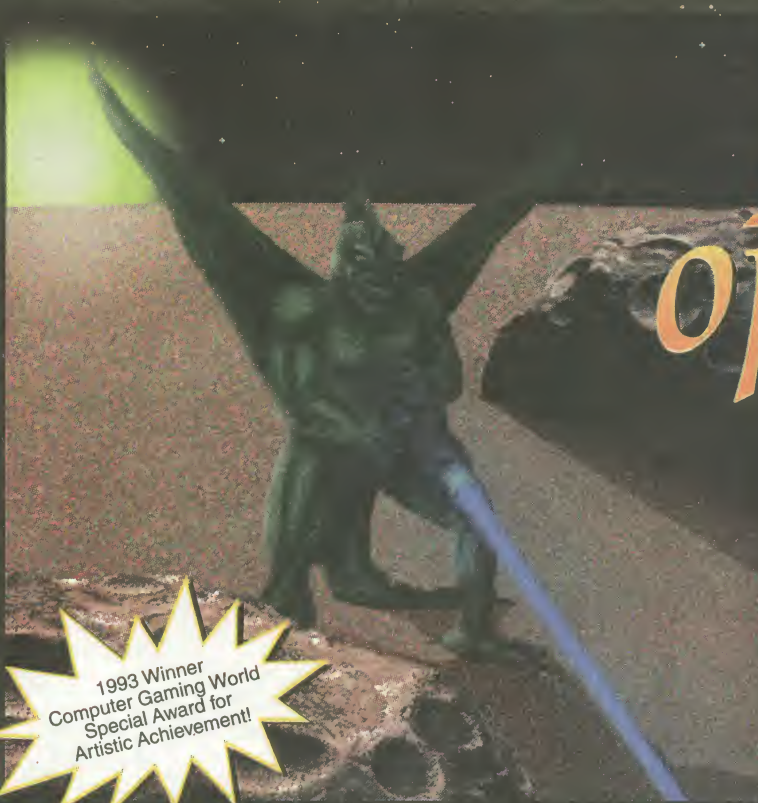


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The Good,

Artwork by Gilead © 1994



Zayre

Occupation: Drifter

Skills: Animal handling, Animal empathy

Motivation: Seeing the World

Weaknesses: Sensitive, gullable

Zayre is usually encountered along lonely frontier roads and in quiet inns on the borderlands where she has paused on her journey to rest or replenish her funds.

Zayre was orphaned as a child and left in the care of monks in a remote forest monastery. She developed an affinity with all woodland creatures and is able to talk with them on a telepathic level.

She has a large black cat and a trained raven which serve as scouts reporting back to her things they have seen and heard. Zayre usually shuns the company of other humans unless she needs an escort through a particularly dangerous area.

She will not tolerate the abuse of animals and is quick to chastise merchants and travellers who overload or whip their horses.

Zayre's major weakness is that she is too sensitive and quickly becomes caught up in the problems and tragedies of those she meets. The fact that she is often taken advantage of has not changed her attitude. □

Jolly R. Blackburn



Yar "Blackie" Grangtess

Occupation: Blacksmith

Skills: Metal working, Hth combat

Motivation: Freeing slaves

Weaknesses: Homesick, bad knee

Blackie is a tragic figure. For years he was employed as a blacksmith by a local baron. Part of Blackie's duties was to fasten chains and leg irons to the Baron's slaves. It was something Blackie didn't particularly enjoy - but at the time he considered it just an unpleasant part of his job.

One day Blackie found an escaped slave hiding in his shop. He was about to summon the guard when he noticed how badly the slave had been treated and beaten. Blackie was filled with so much remorse that he allowed the slave to slip away.

The slave was soon captured by the Baron and tortured - during which he revealed that Blackie had aided him.

The Baron responded by selling Blackie's wife and children into slavery and throwing the blacksmith in the dungeon.

Blackie managed to escape and has been desperately seeking his wife and children. As he continues his quest, Blackie frees any slaves he comes across. He has an high price on his head. □

B.A. Felton



Ballas Staar

Occupation: Knight

Skills: Hth combat, Jousting

Motivation: Redemption

Weaknesses: Loner, Tormented

Ballas Staar is a lonely knight who haunts a forested region in the wilderness where he lives as a hermit.

He wears a suite of rusted, pitted armor which hints at his past as a glorious knight. Years ago, Ballas was the personal knight of a famous King and charged with his protection. One day, Ballas led the King's army into battle against an evil invader. The invaders slaughtered the knight's men and proceeded to storm the King's castle where they slaughtered the King along with the royal family.

Ballas, who had been knocked unconscious during the battle, later awoke to learn that he was the only survivor. Ballas was shamed by the fact that he lived while the king he was charged with protecting lay dead along with his men. Tormented, Ballas roamed aimlessly for years seeking to escape the accusing voices that filled his head.

For the last few years he has been living in a cave in the forest and shunning contact with other humans. □

Jolly R. Blackburn



GAME MASTER'S WORKSHOP

The Bad,

Artwork by Gilead © 1994



Tish Reboir

Occupation: Adventurer

Skills: Sword play, Stealth

Motivation: Earning money and respect

Weaknesses: Headstrong, Untrusting

Tish started her adventuring career when she and a group of companions rescued a young prince that had fallen into the hands of a group of Orcs. Saving the prince made Tish famous and she and her companions were rewarded by both the prince and his kingdom.

Since then she has had trouble finding enough adventure in the small shire and has grown tired of her companions. She has become known for her flaming red hair as well as her temper. Tish is not afraid to use her exceptional good looks or her sword to get what she wants.

Boredom setting in she has taken to hanging out with a group of bandits and ruffians. She is looking for an exciting reason to leave the shire and for now the bandits are her best bet.

If she meets up with a likely group of adventurers she will more than likely try to join up. This group will quickly find out that Tish is both a curse and a blessing to have around. □

Steve Johnson



L. Jym

Occupation: Pit fighting trainer

Skills: Martial Arts

Motivation: Success/Fame

Weaknesses: Money, Revenge

L. Jym is a "slave made good." L. Jym was the eunuch guard of a rich merchant's daughters. When L. Jym saved the lives of the young girls by killing a team of kidnappers, L. Jym's owner realized his martial prowess and moved him over to the pit-fighting team.

L. Jym's power and skill quickly advanced him through the ranks (along with his substantial girth, which made him difficult to slow down). L. Jym was the team's champion within a year and won the local tourney later that summer.

L. Jym wasn't without his ambitions, and used a third party to lay bets for him. With a single well placed loss, L. Jym collected enough money to buy his freedom (through a "mysterious buyer") and begin his own stable of fighters. L. Jym is now setting out to ruin his former owner. He wants the man that "removed his honor" to feel the same sort of pain. L. Jym's men have been winning consistently and he's nearing his goal. L. Jym is not above using underhanded methods to win, especially against "them." □

David Williams



Wain Kalis-talen

Occupation: mercenary thief

Skills: Stealth, Thievery, Swords

Motivation: Survival

Weaknesses: inattentive

Wain hasn't finished a "job" in over 5 years. Wain has been travelling from city to city, and starting jobs for that entire time. Wain will arrive in town and show off his skills, which are actually quite extensive.

Eventually, his prowess will gain the attention of someone who needs his special skills. Wain will meet his employer(s) and agree to do the job. Wayne's only condition on the job is that he receives half of his (rather extensive) fee up front. Other than that, he is very agreeable to doing even the toughest jobs.

But that's the last time that Wain will be seen in that town. Wain figures that half of a fee without any danger is a lot smarter than actually doing the job.

Wain has the underworld elements of many different cities furious with him, and has a (minimal) bounty on his head if he shows up again. What Wain doesn't know is that one former employer is upset enough and has sent out an assassin q

David Williams



GAME
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and the Ugly

Artwork by Gilead © 1994



Drular

Type: Guardian creature
Skills: Ferocious fighter
Motivation: Guarding his post
Weaknesses: Low intelligence

Drular was created by a group of intoxicated magic users who got into an argument around a roadside campsite over who was the greatest mage.

A series of magical contests ensued that lasted throughout the night. Poor Drular was the result of the contest. One of the mages was challenged to create a guardian creature that could not be vanquished by strength of arms.

The drunken mage's botched spell produced Drular, a squat creature barely three feet high rippling with muscles. Drular was charged with protecting an apple tree which stood in a field near the road's edge.

The next morning the hung-over magic users continued on their way. That was years ago and Drular has been faithfully protecting his appletree.

More than one famished traveller has been lured off the road by the sight of bright juicy red apples growing on the tree only to be challenged to combat by Drular.

A rumor has been spreading that Drular's apples are magical - why else would he be protecting them? □

Jolly R. Blackburn



T'reshnar

Type: Kular Jugbke Goblin
Skills: Combat, Stealth
Motivation: Increase fighting prowess
Weaknesses: Too Eager to fight

The Kular Jungle Goblin is much larger than his smaller cousin. Originally from the deepest part of the Kular Jungle these huge fighting goblins were captured and brought to the mainland as pit fighters.

Many of the goblins have escaped into the wild and have joined their goblin brothers. T'reshnar is the most notorious of these escapees. He has united a small group of goblins and they have taken control of a keep on the outskirts of a medium sized town.

He has currently sent out some of his warriors out to rally other goblin tribes for an attack on the city.

T'reshnar has set himself up as lord of the manor and is using a small group of human mercenaries to man the walls and keep the locals from getting suspicious of the lack of human activities around the keep.

T'reshnar is a very powerful warrior and excellent tactician. If he gets the extra goblin troops and has the time he will probably take the city and possibly more. □

John Zinser



Parzley

Type: Demon Jijnii
Skills: Limited wish, Teleportation
Motivation: Serving men
Weaknesses: Evil appearance

Parzley was once an evil demon from the world of darkness. He spent countless years preying upon the souls of mortal men - tempting them with wishes in exchange for their souls.

One day, Parzley had the misfortune to meet the clever daughter of a king who outsmarted the demon. The daughter's wish was that the demon would be of 'good heart and kind spirit'.

Parzley was instantly transformed into an angel of mercy. He relinquished his hold on the souls he had bargained for and set out to do good.

The problem is that Parzley still resembles an evil demon and no one trusts him. Parzley will appear and offer his free wish to a skeptical human who knows there must be a hitch and is reluctant to accept the offer.

Adventurers that see past his evil looks will find that Parzley is a wonderful companion. He is particularly fond of telling tall tales and will incorporate his friends into the stories. His story telling is so good that anyone hearing it believes his tall tales. □

Jolly R. Blackburn



GAME
MASTER'S
WORKSHOP

Hook, Line & Sinkers™

Adventures on the Fly!



Edited by Jolly R. Blackburn

What is a Hook, Line & Sinker?

Hook, Line & Sinker is one of the most popular columns to have appeared in SHADIS. For the benefit of our new readers, an HLS is a brief plot-line for an adventure presented in a simple format. HLS scenarios are generic and designed to give the Game-master the seeds for an adventure that he can build around. They come in handy when the GM has nothing else prepared, or finds the party has outpaced him and the prepared adventure suddenly ends. Readers are encouraged to submit HLS scenarios for any genre.

Explanation

Hook. The current situation or location of the adventuring party.

Line. An opportunity for adventure that presents itself to the party. A *line* is normally presented as a short paragraph. Think of the line as the "bait" to lure the party into an adventure.

Sinker. The clincher to the *line*. The sinker presents the GM with a dilemma that makes the situation a true adventure.

Pacifist Dragon

Hook: The PCs are travelling along a mountain road and are approached by a local village chieftain to kill a ravaging dragon that's been plaguing the countryside and which has made off with the gold his people mine at a distant site.

Line: The chieftain wants to hire the party on the spot, promising them half the plundered gold as reward if they slay the ferocious dragon. The PCs are given a take-it-or-leave-it proposition; if they don't take the job, the chieftain will continue on down the road looking for another party.

Sinker: There's no gold, no mine, not even a village! The "chieftain" is actually an evil mage who tried to set up shop in these mountains and ran into an old blue dragon who's retired from all the fuss involved with raiding and pillaging. Supported with a meager horde of valuables used to buy food and creature comforts from passing caravans, the dragon dabbles with amusing uses for magic to entertain itself. One experiment has yielded a reusable chewing gum which allows the dragon to blow huge, elastic bubbles to capture attackers. Although able to breathe and cushioned from impact, imprisoned characters are usually kept as playthings for a day or so to teach them some manners (and provide the dragon with some entertainment), then released to bounce down the mountain, where the bubbles pop. Exactly such a humiliating defeat and incarceration as this has the mage out for revenge on the otherwise amicable beast.

Scott Malcomson

wants the party to steal a jewel from the local baron who has 'The Jewel' stored in a deep dungeon so that only he can admire it. The Whisper offers the party a great reward, if they bring him the jewel.

Line: The Whisper claims the jewel is an unusual specimen of a rare line of noble gems. What he forgets to mention is that 'The Jewel' is actually *Jewel de Gemmis*, the daughter of Baron de Gemmis. The Baron is a paranoid freak who thinks that his daughter is the most beautiful thing in the world. In actuality, she is quite ugly and over weight. He has placed his daughter in a plush room in the bottom of a large dungeon.

Sinker: What is the party going to do when they get past a dozen guards, magical enchantments and a host of ingenious traps, only to the ugly daughter of the Baron?

The Whisper will pay highly for the girl (who knows why?). Perhaps he wants to hold her for ransom. Either way he will laugh at the party's confusion when they return with the girl.

Christopher O'Neill

The Brew that Refreshes

Hook: The party comes across a wineskin filled with a bluish liquid. The wineskin is labeled "magical healing potion".

Line: After drinking from the wineskin, the party learns that they have indeed discovered a healing potion. Any character who drinks the potion will immediately find all of his wounds and injuries magically healed. What's more, the wineskin magically refills itself each time the potion is used, providing the party with a seemingly endless supply.

Sinker: The healing potion has one side effect: it happens to be an extremely potent alcoholic beverage. A character who drinks it will get falling-down drunk, and wake up in the morning with a terrific

Correction From Last Issue

Last issue two HLS scenarios were mistakenly attributed to the wrong author. **The Flies** and **Witch on the Hill** were submitted by Greg Stolze.

The Jewel

Hook: A strange man approaches the party. One of the characters thinks he looks awfully familiar. The man, called *The Whisper*, is known to hire groups of adventurers for odd reasons that no one else rightly understands. The Whisper

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hang-over. Drunk characters won't be much good in combat or puzzle solving situations. Characters who drink the potion should also be careful when traveling in urban environments, because chances are good that they will be picked up by the local constabulary for public drunkenness or ambushed by thieves who recognize a prime target when they see one.

Dan Lambert

Barney the Gate Guard

Hook: This scenario is for anyone who has ever come face to face with the average Joe who has been given a little authority which has gone to his head. The party is approaching a large walled city and must get past a lowly guard.

Line: The problem is that the guard has just been promoted. Prior to today, he was a stable boy with no responsibilities. A recent war has depleted the city of young men of fighting age - so the bottom of the barrel was scraped to bolster the city guard.

Sinker: "Barney" will determine that the party is violating some small infraction of the law and will treat it as a major crime. He be very stubborn and refuse to let the party enter the city. The more the party argues with him the more obnoxious he becomes. The GM should make Barney as insulting as possible while making it very clear to the party that he is incredibly wimpy looking.

No self respecting fighter will endure such abuse from an obvious 'weaking' and should be easily provoked into tossing Barney into the moat. Of course, the other guards of the city will feel obligated to give chase.

B.A. Felton

Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil

Hook: The party has insulted a mage or cleric.

Line: The offended NPC possesses a ring that can bestow a powerful curse which he uses on the party.

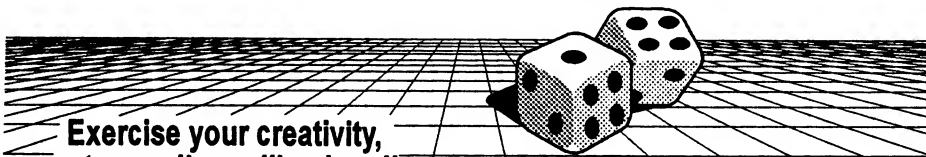
Sinker: The curse has behaves as follows; 1/3 of the party is immediately stricken blind, 1/3 of the party becomes deaf and the other 1/3 becomes mute.

The only cure for this affliction is a minor quest to a holy sight in a remote location where the party must drink water from a magical spring. The GM can have fun throwing obstacles in the party's path while the players attempt to see, hear and speak for each other.

Jolly Blackburn

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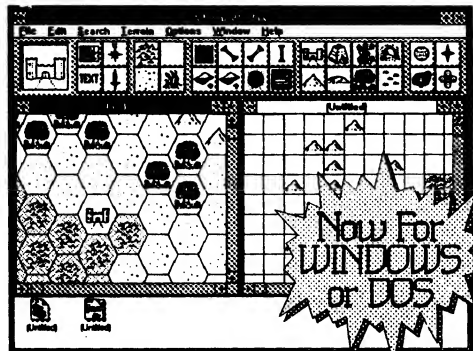
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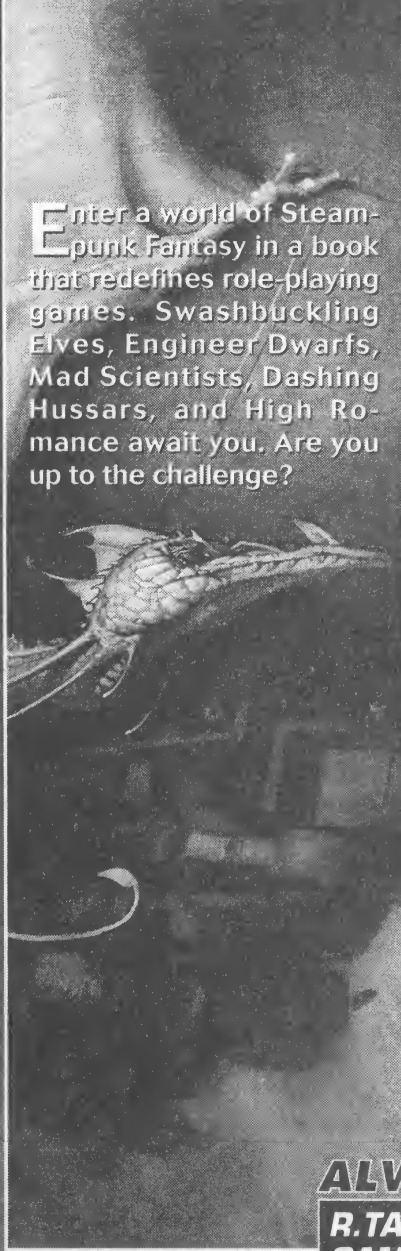
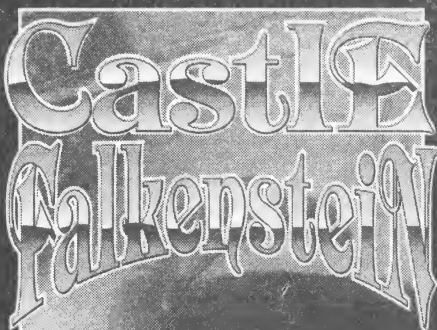
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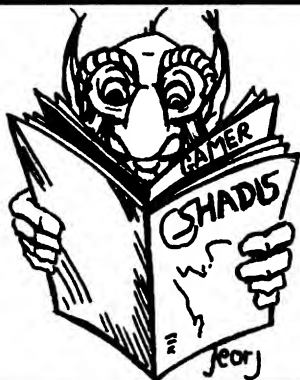


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Zine Scene™



A Closer Look at the Small Press World

Edited by Mitch Michaelson

Most game magazines started as small press, even the big ones like the one you're holding. Not only do fanzines provide grassroots support for the hobby, but they're also the breeding grounds of new professional magazines and new companies. So fanzines are not only the rich history, but also the exciting future of gaming.

Zine Scene is something of a fanzine soapbox, preaching the way of the fanzine for all gamers to hear. Whether you have a stack of games piled in your den or have just begun gaming, take the opportunity to explore the world of gaming fanzines. Find one that catches your eye and write to them. Having seen many of them, I assure you the opportunity is as great — and the enjoyment as intense — as when you first started exploring roleplaying games!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

If you're a fanzine editor, please keep me current on what's up with your zine! I can pass along the information to the right people and get the word out. Likewise, if you read this column and have any suggestions, feel free to write to me. You can contact me (and Morningstar Rising) at PO Box 642026, Omaha, NE 68164.

Parallel Universe Parking

June 1994
Deadly Matters



Science Fiction & Fantasy
Newsletter serving
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For Fans, by Fans
Issue #4

Parallel Universe Parking

Publisher: Lincoln Fantasy & Sci-Fi Club
Editor: Tudor Lewis
Frequency: Monthly

This is the club newsletter I saw that made me realize I could create a newsletter, too. Originally the newsletter for the *Lincoln Fantasy & Science Fiction Club* (based in Lincoln, Nebraska), it has recently changed its name to **Parallel Universe Parking** and improved its format.

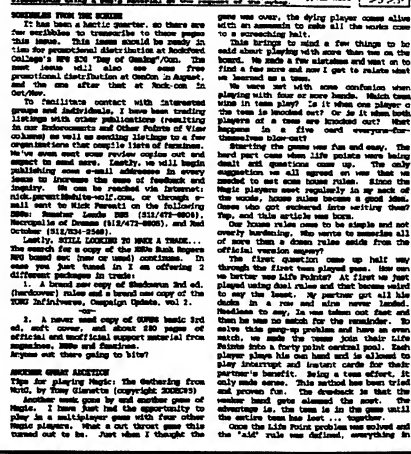
As a club newsletter, **PUP** looks great. Besides a catchy name, it has a number of contributors, a variety of material, and excellent layout for something so small.

PUP reviews roleplaying games, Japanese animation, fiction, conventions, and everything fannish. They have also printed interviews with writers like Roger Zelazny, Katherine Kurtz, and Richard Knaak (Dragonlance). Their news articles are shaping up, giving current reports on shows like *MST3K*, *Babylon 5*, *Star Trek*, *Dr. Who*, and *Brisco County*. The text is legible, typical fanzine writing.

Club members should be proud they have such a newsletter. It allows them space to practice their writing skills and produce a good product. Other club zines would do well to imitate **PUP's** style.

Locally, **PUP** is free. You can find it at most of the local game and book stores. Or you can write to Parallel Universe Parking, c/o Tudor Lewis, 1243 South 23rd Street, Lincoln, NE 68502.

Papyrus™ #14



Papyrus

Publisher: Papyrus Publishing
Editor: Nick Parenti
Frequency: Quarterly

Papyrus reminds me of what gaming was like in the "gaming on a budget" 70's. **Papyrus** harkens back to that era by reviewing game supplements out of discount bins (like Lands of Adventure and AD&D modules) and listing products for trade. The editor focuses more on content than expensive art or binding.

Papyrus' articles are for adventure games, including *AD&D*, *Champions*, *Vampire*, *Battletech*, and *Magic: The Gathering*. Articles come from several sources: the editor, electronic bulletin boards, and other fanzines. (All are properly credited.) For those of you without computers, this may be of value to you, since a few were quite thought-provoking.

For example, there was a race of turtle-like creatures in issue #8. They were created by Steve Miller and Sharon Lee in *Agent of Change*, adapted for GURPS by Lestat on the Illuminati BBS, and printed by **Papyrus**. I wrote a race in my fantasy world based on this article.

Papyrus is almost free. You have to send the editor \$1 or trade him something for it. Currently, that's quite a value at around 20 pages per issue. To contact **Papyrus**, write to: Papyrus, c/o Nick Parenti, 4823 Flintridge Ct. #2, Rockford, IL 61107-5010.



Haymaker!

Publisher: James Davis
Editor: James Davis
Frequency: Quarterly

Omaha is home to **Haymaker!**, "an APAZine for use with the Hero System", coordinated by James Davis. (In an Amateur Press Association zine, members send their material to a coordinator, who binds them together under one title.)

APAZines generally have low copy quality. **Haymaker!** has color covers and good copy quality. APAZines usually limit distribution to members. However, you can buy it at a local game store.

For those of you familiar with the Hero System, the writing quality in **Haymaker!** is only slightly lower than that in published supplements. The reason is because many Champions writers are members of **Haymaker!**, including Steve Long, Chris Avellone, Bryce Nakagawa, and Hero Editor Bruce Harlick. **Haymaker!** also has excellent Fantasy Hero material.

I rate **Haymaker!** highly because with a single-game topic, it's more focused than other zines. You know what you're getting and the chances of getting something you like is high, if you play Champions. If not, then **Haymaker!** only has value to you if you want a zine for super-heroic RPG material. To become a member, contact **Haymaker!**, c/o James Davis, 1502 S. 32nd Ave., Omaha, NE 68105.



Renegade Transmissions

Publisher: Crunchy Frog Enterprises
Editor: Paul Arden Lidberg
Frequency: Quarterly

The premier issue of *Renegade Transmissions* is an exceptional first entry into fanzines. RT is the "Official Newsletter of the RENEGADE LEGION Universe." It's produced by Crunchy Frog Enterprises, the company with the license for FASA's *Renegade Legion* line.

Much of the first issue is devoted to "setting things up." This includes editor's notes, a reader survey, submissions guidelines, how to become a playtester, and subscription data. While these aren't initially useful in play, devoted *Renegade Legion* fans have desperately needed this kind of support for a long time.

The two major articles in RT #1 are an *Interceptor Miniatures Movement System* by Sam Lewis and the FASA staff, and the *Sandworld Shocktroopers* by myself. The miniatures article is exactly what *Renegade Legion* players need — innovative new ways to play the game. My article presented a new, unofficial race for *Centurion*, along with new tanks.

While normally leery of promoting projects I've been involved with, I felt it important to get the word out to *Renegade Legion* players.

To contact *Renegade Transmissions*, write to: *Renegade Transmissions*, 889 Mowry Ave. #105, Fremont, CA 94536.



Sedated

Publisher: Apex Publications, Inc.
Editor: Scott Folke
Frequency: Quarterly

The last thing you'll feel like after reading this zine is sedated! This enticing zine is for Apex Publications' dark RPG *Shattered Dreams*. My understanding of the game is that it's very similar to the movie *Dreamscape*. Characters are *Dreamwalkers*, battling *Renegade Dreamwalkers* and demonic creatures.

The first issue, which I got at GenCon, included a game review (SLA Industries, a British RPG), a track-by-track review of *The Crow* soundtrack, and a review of the movie. It also had fiction, dark poetry, rules Q&A, and adventure hooks (along with pictures of fishhooks).

The excellent layout in **Sedated** offsets the typos. The printing quality is far above most other zines. The art ranges from professional to surreal. The guys at Apex told me they like it that way, since it's supposed to be art from inside nightmares.

Sedated is only for mature readers, and the inside page says so. The articles involve gratuitous violence and graphic sexual situations.

If you're a mature adult with an interest in horror gaming, I encourage you to get **Sedated**. It's not on the edge — it's way over it. Write to **Sedated**, c/o Apex Publications, Inc., PO Box 20405, Bloomington, MN 55420. □

SHADIS Con-Nection

Your Link to Game Conventions



The following list is provided by **Convention Contact**, a magazine devoted to announcing gaming-related conventions. We presently focus on conventions in states east of the Mississippi. Please note, that many of the conventions we have chosen to list are not specifically game conventions but deal with topics of interest to many gamers (i.e. fantasy/sci fi cons). We will expand our listings as information is reported to us. We urge you to write or call the con organizers before attending (in case of date/time alterations). If you are a con organizer, or know of a con that should have been listed (no matter where it takes place), please contact us at: **Convention Contact**, PO Box 9342 WBB, Dayton OH 45409-9342; 513-222-GAME.

11/4-6: Contradiction (14), Box 100, Bridge Stn, Niagara Falls NY 14305. 716-285-2290. Location: Days Inn, Niagara Falls NY. Focus: SF, fantasy. Weekend Rate: \$25

11/4-6: U-Con, P.O. Box 4491, Ann Arbor MI 48106-4491. 313-4874931 or 487-2613. Location: U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI. Focus: wide variety of gaming. Weekend Rate: \$9

11/4-6: Adventure Gamefest, 6517 NE Alberta, Portland OR 97218. 503-282-6856, 206-574-GAME. Location: Oregon Conv. Center, Portland OR. Focus: various gaming, prizes, auction, Puffing Billy. Weekend Rate: \$15

11/4-6: Mid-Atlantic Book Fair & Convention, Deen & Jay Kogan, 508 S 8th St, Philadelphia PA 19147. 215-923-0211. Location: Holiday Inn Independence Mall, Philadelphia PA. Focus: mystery fiction. Weekend Rate: \$40

11/4-6: Constellation (13), NASFA, P.O. Box 4857, Huntsville AL 35815-4857. 205-883-5922, 205-882-1006 (after 6pm CT). Location: Tom Beville Center, Huntsville AL. Focus: art auction, dealers, various guests, masquerade. Weekend Rate: \$25

11/4-6: Eclecticon, Kathryn Agel, 9-11 Ayres Ct., Bayonne NJ 07002-3510. Loca-

tion: Airport Ramada, Newark NJ. Focus: media fandom, fanzines, hall costume contest, con suite. Weekend Rate: \$35

11/5: Amiga Expo, 28 N. Main St., Apt. 2-A, Glen Ellyn IL 60137. 708-582-8895 (Fax). Location: College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn IL. Focus: Amiga computers. Weekend Rate: \$0

11/5: Gold Con, AU Gamers, P.O. Box 493, Budd Lake NJ 07828. 201347-2351. Location: Am. Legion Post 328, Clark NJ. Focus: various gaming, RPGA. Weekend Rate: \$8

11/5: SF Bay Area Book Festival, 415-861-BOOK. Location: Concourse Exhibition Center, San Francisco CA. Focus: books (incl. SF), SF panel: Future Visions. Weekend Rate: \$4

11/5-6: Rock Con, 14225 Hansberry Rd., Rockton IL 61072. Location: Rockford Lutheran High School, Rockford IL. Focus: wide variety of games, auction, RPGA. Weekend Rate: \$5

11/5-6: Novagcon, P.O. Box 7158, Reston VA 22091. 703-532-9000. Location: Best Western Falls Church. Focus: Historical & SF minis, boardgames, vendors. Weekend Rate: \$10

11/5-6: Battle of Fort Branch, Jim Niedwick, 210 N. Walden Pond Rd., Benson NC 27504. 919-894-8059, 892-2575 (Bill Bates). Focus: Civil War reenactment

11/5-6: Rucon (5), Parsons Union Bldg., LHU, Lock Haven PA 17745. Location: Lock Haven U., Lock Haven PA. Focus: variety of games, SFB Ace tourney, contests, discussions. Weekend Rate: \$10 (\$15 at door)

11/10-13: Contrary, PO Box 628, W. Warren MA 01092. 413-436-5053 (Rich). Location: Ramada Hotel, W Springfield MA. Focus: Various gaming esp. RPG. Weekend Rate: \$25

11/11-12: Falcon, 68 Kelly Dr., Florence KY 41042. 606-525-2087. Holy Trinity Church, Norwood OH. Focus: wide variety of gaming incl. Man-O-War, RPGs, Historical & other minis, SFB

11/11-13: Vidcon, Debra Lynne Hicks, 12524 Lovers Lane, Riverview FL 33569. 813-677-6347 (after 7:00). Location: Airport Holiday Inn, Tampa FL. Focus: zines, media, writers workshops, trivia, Tampa tours. Weekend Rate: \$25

11/11-13: Anime East, Box 10371, New Brunswick NJ 08906. 908-7199770. Location: Hilton Towers, East Brunswick NJ. Focus: anime, Japanese comics, gaming. Weekend Rate: \$35

11/11-13: Windycon (21), PO Box 184, Palatine IL 60078-0184. 708383-6948. Location: Hyatt Regency Woodfield, Schaumburg IL. Focus: art show, filking, films, art show, novice writers contest. Weekend Rate: \$35

11/11-13: Tuscon (21), PO Box 26822, Tucson AZ 85726. Location: Executive Inn, Tucson AZ. Focus: gaming, art show, consuite, video. Weekend Rate: \$25

11/12: Saga (3), 800 Sena Dr., Metairie LA 70005. 504-455-0998 or 504-734-1953. Location: Howard Johnson's, Metairie LA. Focus: wide variety gaming. Weekend Rate: \$10

11/12-13: Imagination, Box 301, Stn. M, Montreal PQ H1V 2L6 CANADA. 514-255-4043. Location: Hotel Martine, Montreal PQ. Focus: SF, fantasy

11/12-13: Pentacon, PO Box 11174 Ft. Wayne IN 46856. 219-3564209. Location: Grand Wayne Center, Fort Wayne IN. Focus: numerous games, RPGA, computer games, flea market, door prizes

11/18-20: Philcon (58), Box 8303, 30th St. Stn., Philadelphia PA 19101. 215-957-4004. Location: Adam's Mark Hotel, Philadelphia

PA. Focus: SF, fantasy, art show, panels, masquerade. Weekend Rate: \$35

11/18-20: ShaunCon (9), Role Players Guild of Kansas City, P.O. Box 7457, Kansas City MO 64116. 816-455-5020. Location: Howard Johnson, Kansas City MO. Focus: RPGA, board and mini gaming, official MAGIC, charity auction (incl. MAGIC stuff).

11/18-20: Wishcon, 500 Monroe Tpk., Monroe CT 06468. 203-4590413, 617-986-9952. Location: Sheraton Monarch, Springfield MA. Focus: Star Trek, Dr. Who, comics, films, GOH: Nana Visitor, Nicola Bryant, Mark Goddard. Weekend Rate: \$38

11/18-20: Soonercon (10), P.O. Box 892687, Oklahoma City OK 73189-2687. 405-794-2907. Location: Century Center Hotel, Oklahoma City, OK. Focus: various gaming, videos, masquerade, dance, many guests. Weekend Rate: \$25

11/19: Brushfire, David Ferris, Armorsoft Inc., PO Box 323, Bloomsburg PA 17815. 717-784-7162. Location: Hotel Magee, Bloomsburg Pa. Focus: various gaming

11/19: Lagacon 17, L.A.G.A. 806 Cumberland St., Lebanon PA 17042. 717-274-8706. Location: Eagles Hall, Lebanon PA. Focus: variety of events. Weekend Rate: \$5

11/25-27: Loscon, LASFaS. 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood CA 91601. Location: Airport Hilton, Burbank CA. Focus: SF, fantasy, gaming, filking, films. Weekend Rate: \$35

11/25-27: Con Cat (6), 805 College St., Knoxville TN 37921. 615522-3470 (Chloie Airolidi). Focus: SF, Fantasy, gaming, masquerade.

11/25-27: Context (12), Friends of Fandom, Box 541822, Houston TX 77245. 713-550-1367. Location: Holiday Inn-Medical Center, Houston TX. Focus: SF, fantasy, gaming,

auctions, films, masquerade, filking. Weekend Rate: \$20

11/25-27: ConCat (6), 805 College St., Knoxville TN 37921. 615522-3470. Location: Radisson Hotel, Knoxville TN. Focus: SF, gaming, art, consuite, masquerade. Weekend Rate: \$30

11/25-27: Darkover Grand Council Meeting (17), Armida Council, Box 7203, Silver Spring MD 20907. 202-737-4609 (before 11:15pm). Location: Holiday Inn, Timonium MD. Focus: Marion Zimmer Bradley, Darkover books, Feminism. Weekend Rate: \$30

11/25-27: Visions, Box 1202, Highland Park IL 60035. 708-405WHO1. Location: Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Rosemont IL. Focus: Dr. Who, Blake 7, Red Dwarf, Star Trek, etc.. Weekend Rate: \$75

11/26: Game Day (Fall), Leslie A. King, Metalcraft Miniatures and More, P.O.B. 6, 926 N. 9th St., Elwood IN 46036. 317-552-8029. Location: Metalcraft Miniatures and More, Elwood IN. Focus: all sorts of gaming, esp. Battletech. Weekend Rate: \$0

11/27: Central Mass. Toy Show (Winter), Bill Bovenzi, 8 Whipple St., Worcester MA

01607. 508-791-0269. Location: Auburn Elks Lodge, Auburn MA. Focus: toys (antique and modern). Weekend PreReg: \$3

12/30-1/2: New Year's Bash, Mad Mike, 2802 Rolling Acres, Champaign IL 61821. 217-359-6090. Location: Champaign IL. Focus: relaxicon, filking, Animaniacs, Red Dwarf - fannish New Year's party. Weekend Rate: \$15 (\$20 at door)

1/6-8: Tropicon 13, Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33307. Location: Airport Hilton, West Palm Beach FL. Focus: SF, fantasy, numerous guests. Weekend Rate: \$24

1/6-8: Necrocon, Box 211101, Columbus OH 43221. 614-841-9661 or 891-6871. Location: Harley Hotel, Columbus OH. Focus: gaming, consuite, filking, SF, fantasy. Weekend Rate: \$10 (\$15 10/3112/14, \$18 at door)

1/6-8: Siege of Augusta (3), Jim Birdseye, 3411 Kerry Pl., Augusta GA 30909. 706-737-5735. Location: Landmark Hotel / Conv. Center, Augusta GA. Focus: historical miniatures. Weekend Rate: \$13 (HMGS=\$10, \$15/\$13 at door)

1/6-8: Musicon, PO Box 198121, Nashville TN 37219-8121. 615-8895951 (Lee) or 708-

394-3340 (Kathy). Location: Quality Inn, Nashville TN. Focus: Filking. Weekend Rate: \$23 (\$28 after 12/1)

1/13-15: Arisia, 1 Kendall Sq., #322, Cambridge MA 02139. 617371-6565. Location: Park Plaza Hotel, Boston MA. Focus: SF, fantasy, gaming, filking, masquerade films, LARPG, comics. Weekend Rate: \$25

1/13-15: Confurence, P.O. Box 1958, Garden Grove CA 92642-1958. 714-530-4993. Location: Airpporter Garden Hotel, Irvine CA. Focus: Anthropomorphic Seminar/Convention, various guests. Weekend Rate: \$20 (\$25 12/1-1/1, \$30 at door)

1/13-15: Chattacon (20), Box 23908, Chattanooga TN 37422-3908. 404-578-8461. Location: Road House, Chattanooga TN. Focus: SF, fantasy, art show, gaming, masquerade. Weekend Rate: \$20 (\$20 11/30-1/1, \$30 thereafter)

1/14: Wintercon, P.O. Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192. Location: Kennedy Recreation Center, Lincoln Park MI. Focus: wide selection of all games. Weekend Reg. Rate: \$10

1/14: W.S.U. Game Fair, WSU Adventurers' Guild, P.O. Box 31016, Dayton OH 45431-

0016. Location: Wright State U., Dayton OH. Focus: charity auction, RPGA, Magic, Torg, AD&D, Call of Cthulhu, Tri-State RPG Championship member

1/14-16: Battlecon (3), Trags, 3023, Hancock St., Ste C, San Diego CA 92110. Location: Old Town Ramada Hotel, San Diego CA. Focus: gaming. Weekend Rate: \$15 (\$20 after 11/30)

1/27-29: Gamicon Epsilon, PO Box 525, Iowa City IA 52242. Location: Nat'l Gd. Armory, Iowa City IA. Focus: wide variety of gaming, huxters, auction. Weekend Rate: \$13

1/27-29: Confusion, AASFA, Box 8284, Ann Arbor MI 48107. 313GURU-PHD. Location: Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, Romulus MI. Focus: SF, fantasy, panels, gaming, seminars, computers. Weekend Rate: \$20 (\$25 11/15-1/15, \$30 after)

1/27-29: Round Con, Trella Wilhite, USC, PO Box 80018, Columbia SC 29225. 803-695-9473. Location: Quality Inn NE, Columbia SC. Focus: gaming, RPGA, SFB, Magic, LARPG. Weekend Rate: \$10 (\$15 after 1/15

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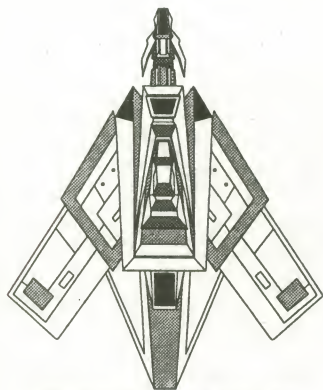
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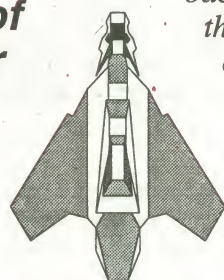
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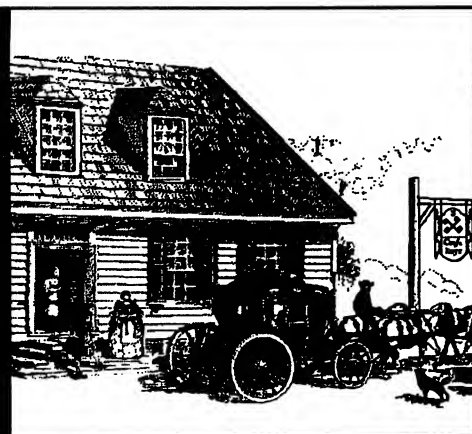


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GAME
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Close Encounters of the Random Kind™



Each issue **Close Encounters of the Random Kind** (CERK) features random encounter/event tables which the Game Master can simply drop into his current campaign. I will try to cover various genres of gaming and keep the information generic enough to be used with any system. Readers are encouraged to contribute to this column or suggest ideas and topics for future tables.

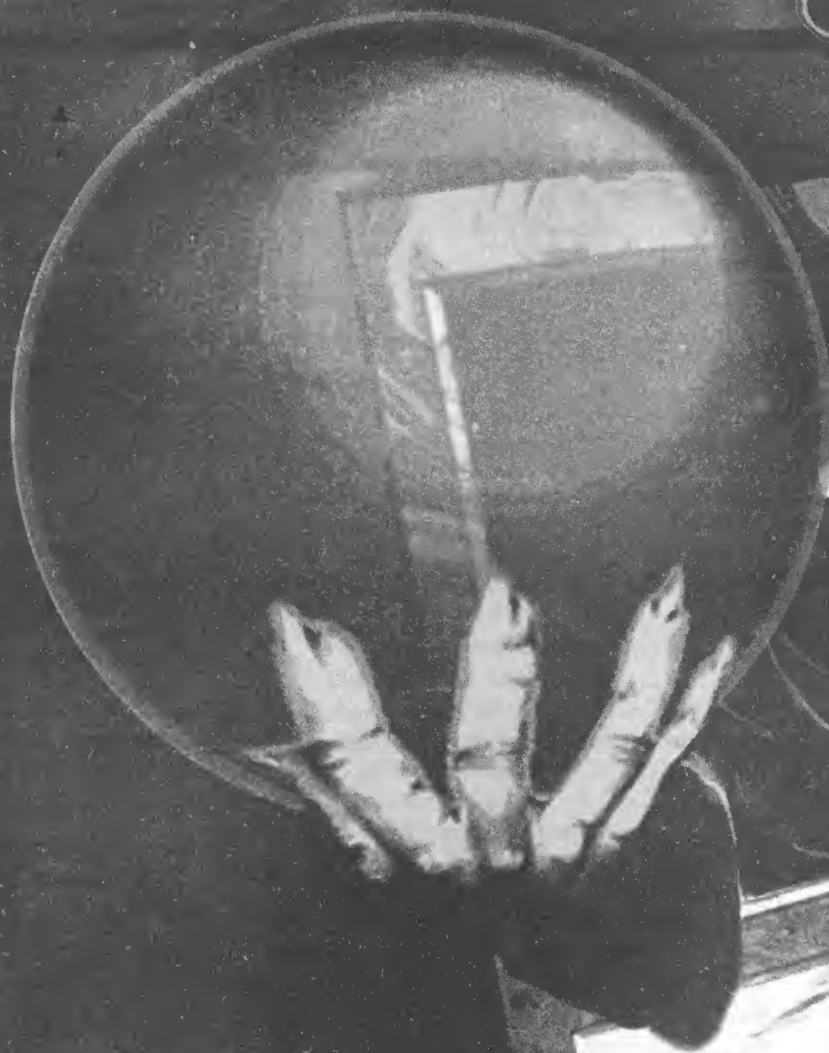
CERK Table 3: Tavern or Inn 1d100 By John W. Baichtal

- 01.....Card game.
- 02...A bartender accuses player of stealing money.
- 03.....Bard begins to play (badly).
- 04.....Tavern is robbed by armed bandits.
- 05.....Female prostitute/assassin.
- 06.....Thieves set fire to the stable as a diversion.
- 07.....Someone buys a round of drinks.
- 08.....Brawl erupts.
- 09.....Knife/sword sharpener doing business.
- 10.....The bar runs out of ale.
- 11.....Pickpocket makes his/her move.
- 12.....Married couple and their families celebrating.
- 13.....2d4 nonhumans drinking and laughing.
- 14.....Swaggering knight.
- 15.....Card cheat is caught.
- 16.....Merchant seeking bodyguards for voyage.
- 17.....Wanted felon thinks PCs are watching him.
- 18.....Snake oil salesman drumming up business.
- 19.....Old friends meet after many years apart.
- 20.....Fugitive in disguise.
- 21.....Crippled ex-soldier bumming drinks.
- 22.....Messiah proclaiming the end of the world.
- 23.....Four housewives out for a pint.
- 24.....Someone's drink has been drugged.
- 25.....Famous adventurer(s) enter the bar.

- 26.....Broken man drowning his sorrows.
- 27.....A guard's crossbow accidentally discharges.
- 28.....Two outdoorsmen with longbows.
- 29.....Adventuring party hiring on wizards.
- 30.....Party member spills drink on patron.
- 31.....Coin purse is found on the floor.
- 32.....Patrons having a game of darts.
- 33.....Priest tries to convert the PCs.
- 34.....Dagger is thrown at a PC.
- 35.....2d4 off-duty town guards.
- 36...Patron who can't pay for his drinks is beaten.
- 37.....Con artist looking for 'investors'.
- 38.....1d8 female mercenaries.
- 39.....Criminal asks the PCs for help.
- 40.....Wine merchant giving out free samples.
- 41.....Knife juggler.
- 42.....Beggar asks for alms.
- 43.....Town guard making an arrest.
- 44.....Fat lady dancing on a table.
- 45.....1d4 military recruiters.
- 46.....Lost traveller asking for directions.
- 47.....Brilliant musician playing an instrument.
- 48.....Patron has a heart attack.
- 49.....Member of aristocracy, slumming.
- 50..Party member's drink is knocked over by drunk.
- 51.....Tattooed musclemen looking for a fight.
- 52.....Animal trainer with tiger cub.
- 53.....Drink mixup, PC gets wretched swill.
- 54.....Sewer monster climbs up through latrine.
- 55.....Lycanthrope transforms.
- 56.....Patron is robbed.
- 57.....Parade passes outside.
- 58.....Execution is announced.
- 59.....Party member spots previously stolen item.
- 60.....Juiced-up patron hits on a PC.
- 61.....Ostler closes early.
- 62.....Party member overhears plot.
- 63.....The party's inn room is broken into.
- 64.....New owners examining inn and tavern.
- 65.....Bouncers expelling a drunk.
- 66.....Patron attempting to leave without paying.

- 67.....Ship captain recruiting for a voyage.
- 68.....Horse goes berserk outside.
- 69.....Visiting country bumpkins getting robbed.
- 70.....Guard nailing up wanted posters.
- 71.....Dice game involving four non-humans.
- 72.....Pimp displaying his wares.
- 73.....3d4 gypsies.
- 74.....Bounty hunter scanning the crowd.
- 75.....Party member is mistaken for a criminal.
- 76.....Rude patrons insult PCs.
- 77...Party member sees ghost that haunts the inn.
- 78.....Bartender getting fired for stealing.
- 79.....Guards corner a wanted criminal.
- 80.....Well-known politician.
- 81.....A merchant and her two bodyguards.
- 82.....Fortune teller.
- 83.....Card shark starting up a game.
- 84.....Jeweler being stalked by thieves.
- 85.....Bugs are found in PCs food/drink.
- 86.....Two wizards exchanging spells.
- 87..Three town guards approach, asking questions.
- 88.....Patron is murdered by a group of assassins.
- 89.....Strumpet dressed in crimson.
- 90.....Fur trader.
- 91.....Sullen, hair-trigger berserker.
- 92.....Arm wrestling tournament begins.
- 93.....Swashbucklers having a duel.
- 94.....1d8 Sailors.
- 95.....Patron chokes on a piece of food.
- 96.....Tavern catches on fire.
- 97.....Foreigner who doesn't speak the language.
- 98.....Drunk, who mistakes a PC for his wife.
- 99...2d4 thieves enter, eyeing the patrons closely.
- 100.....Fence, who shows the PCs his wares.

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Up My Sleeve

The World of Card Games

Edited by David Williams



Welcome to the second installment of **Up My Sleeve**. Last issue we tried to summarize the card market as it stands right now, but this issue we're going to look ahead a bit more. We have previews of **Towers in Time** and **Flights of Fantasy**, both of which should be released soon, and complete card lists of **Towers in Time**, **Galactic Empires**, and **Doomtrooper** (all on your store's shelves in the near future). The "In the Cards" section has information on many new card games and products to be released soon.

We're not going to neglect the current hot games just to tell you what's coming down the road, however. We also have an article written by the **Magic: the Gathering** National Champion Bo Bell about his deck and experience at the **Origins Tournament**. This issue marks the first installment of **Single Card Strategies**—an oration by Canticle, Necromancer Emeritus on the uses and abuses of a single Magic card.

Check out the review of *Ianus Game's* **Heavy Gear: Showdown in the Badlands** that was released at GenCon (and rapidly sold out there). We also have a checklist for Spellfire's first, horror-themed expansion set: **Ravenloft**. In addition, Eric Allison of the **Armory** was kind enough to provide us with a copy of their **Jyhad Cheat Sheet**. We're sure you'll want to make a copy and keep it close at hand during those epic battles.

Finally, we would like to throw out a bit of a teaser for next issue: The center section of SHADIS 17 will be devoted to a set of variant rules for use with your **Magic: the Gathering** cards. This "variant game" will be played on a special 24X36 inch full color poster/gameboard that features unique artwork by Mark Poole (known for his M:tG art such as Library of Alexandria). The board and

rules will only be available in SHADIS 17. Please note that the game is an alternate way to play M:tG and is not officially sanctioned by *Wizards of the Coast*.

The rules themselves will be for a multi-player game that will change the relative values of many cards and provide a brand new way to play with your cards. Look for SHADIS Magazine to run tournaments of this game variant at all of our future convention appearances.

In the Cards

Two card games about to hit the stores (you knew the wave of new card games was coming, didn't you?) are **Slasher** and **Doomtrooper**. **Slasher** by *Precedence Publishing* is a tongue-in-cheek spoof of B-grade horror flicks. In **Slasher**, the "victims" have to survive the "fight scene" and the "sex scene" while trapped in a house with the slasher. Players introduce plot twists to finish each scene with as much gratuitous blood and carnage as their funny-bone can handle. Plot twists include "Blood Bath" and "Caught with Pants Down". One of the players may end up being the slasher, so watch your back! Play only ends when the slasher or all of the players have been killed off (at least until the sequel). **Slasher** is scheduled for release in October (just in time for Halloween) for \$13.00.

Doomtrooper by *Heartbreaker* is a collectible card game based on their RPG **The Mutant Chronicles**. **Doomtrooper** will be released in the now-familiar decks (60 cards with 2 rare, 13 uncommon) and packs (16 cards - 1 rare, 3 uncommon) format. The first series represents the warriors, weapons, equipment, missions and more and will contain 337 different cards (checklist later this issue). In **Doomtrooper**, your squad of warriors, will compete against other corporation's squads to complete missions and destroy

the Dark Legion. As Mankind's last hope, can the squads work together when they need to? **Doomtrooper** ships in November.

The Scrye Life Counter by *Reaper Miniatures* for \$7.95 is the hottest thing in the card game supplemental market. This is a unique alternative to using dice, beads, or a pencil and paper to keep track of your life points in any of the card games out there right now. The Life Counter has two metal pieces: a base and the wizard. The base flips over to count from one to forty. The wizard holds a semi-precious stone in his hand and spins on the base to point to your current life level. At the rate these have been selling, you should grab one of these soon if you want one.

Wizards of the Coast has announced that they have signed licensing agreements with *R. Talsorian* and *FASA* to produce **Deckmaster** games for **Cyberpunk** and **Battletech**. These games should be released sometime in '96. The next Deckmaster game to be released is *Middle Earth*.

Look for *Hillary's Toy Box* (who produced the popular **Plague and Pestilence**) to release **Pirates** in the near future.

The first 100 cards of *Steve Jackson Games' Illuminati* card game have gone to the printer. By popular demand, they have removed the card numbers. (Customer feedback ran better than 12 to 1 against having numbers on the cards.) Look for a December 5 ship date and December 12 release date!

According to *WotC's* Internet online rep, the "1994 Expansion Sampler" will be available throughout 1995 and will contain cards from "all expansions up through *The Dark*."

David Williams

WARGAMES WEST

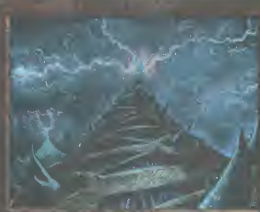
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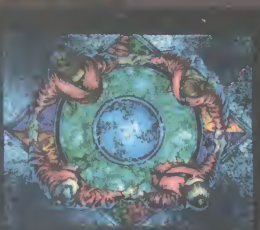
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Single Card Strategies

This Month's Card:

Creature Bond

By Jeff Scott Franzman

Across the stands of marsh grass, through pools of fetid water, the tower of Canticle stands against the horizon. Deep within the Marsh, the Necromancer practises his dark arts, and buries himself within books and tomes gathered from the corners of the world. Within the study, candles burn fitfully, and shadows dance against the walls. The Necromancer sits behind his desk, leafing through a tome bound in Shivan hide.

"Greetings!" The Necromancer nods. Three Gremlins emerge from the darkened corners of the study, pushing a chair before them.

"The duel can be a dangerous place, and when locked in battle with another Mage, there is little room for error. Cruel though it may be, turning the spells of a foe to work against them is often the surest path to victory. Such is the nature of the card, **Creature Bond**.

Obviously, the placing of a **Creature Bond** can serve well simply as a deterrent. There are few Magi who will move the Ironroot Treefolk into the fray when the chance of taking 5 damage as a result of the bond exists. However, this simple (yet effective) method of using the bond ignores many other aspects of the spell. Imagine the confusion caused an opponent as you begin to place protective enchantments upon one of their more powerful defenders. First a *Holy Strength*, then a *Holy Armour*, and then you begin pouring white mana into the *Holy Armour*.

All becomes clear, however, as you toss a **Creature Bond** on the creature, and then proceed to destroy it. Depending on the kinds of magic you utilize, one could use *Terror*, *Fissure* or *Flash Flood* to terminate the Bonded creature, resulting in a great deal of damage to your foe. Simply adding a *Holy Strength* to the *Argothian Treefolk*, bonding it, and then destroying it will cause 7 damage.

The same thing is possible against monsters such as *Colossus of Sardia* or

Obsidian Golem. Simply bond the creature, and then cast *Disenchant*. The creatures which once had you fearing for your very life are now more of a hindrance to your opponent than a benefit. Even worse, using *Detonate* to destroy *Artifact Creatures*, will result in a tremendous amount of damage. The effects of *Detonate* on a *Colossus of Sardia* with a *Creature Bond*, can be absolutely appalling.

Used with *Xenic Poltergeist*, the spell can be an effective means of destroying artifacts, and inflicting damage at the same time. Use the *Poltergeist* to turn an artifact (*Aladdin's Lamp*, for example) into an artifact creature. *Bond* and *Detonate*. Along the same lines, one can use *Ashnod's Transmogrator* to turn a beast into an *Artifact Creature*, which can then be detonated. Working in conjunction, *Creature Bond* and *Detonate* can be truly frightening.

Another use of *Creature Bond* is in concert with a spell such as *Wanderlust*. Now, the creature is causing 1 damage a turn, but the owner of the beast can hardly be rid of the creature without taking a great deal of damage.

Giant Growth and *Blood Lust* are two other spells which can work quite well with *Creature Bond*. With *Giant Growth*, simply cast it on the Bonded creature and follow up with a spell that will terminate the poor thing's existence. *Blood Lust*? Once, while dueling the Mage Bandares, I found myself at a loss. One more assault from his *Lost Soul*, and all would be ended. I Bonded the *Lost Soul*, cast *Blood Lust* (making it 6/1), and then cast *Transmutation*. Now, the *Lost Soul* was 1/6, and the application of 2 *Lightning Bolts* ended the duel in my favour.

Canticle closes the tome. A gremlin sits on the edge of the desk, casually drinking from the inkwell. With a glance, the Necromancer sends it scurrying behind one of the many bookshelves "I hope you've found this discourse of some use. So few make their way into the Mourning Lands in these times. Perhaps we'll meet again..."

Canticle, Necromancer Emeritus

[Canticle, N.E. and "Single Card Strategies" are Copyright Jeff Franzman.]

The Winning Deck (And how to build one)

by Bo Bell

Editor's Note: Bo was the winner of the National Magic: the Gathering Tournament held at Origins '94 in San Jose, California this past July. We asked Bo to share with our readers his winning deck building strategies.

When I was first asked to write this article people kept asking me, "Are you going to include a list of the cards in your deck?" My answer was always no, until I saw the new limited list for tournament decks.

My main card was put on it, so I guess it can't hurt (that and the fact that the deck has been retired). But before you get to see what I used, let's look at my strategy for building a deck.

First I choose a theme for my deck: what do I want it to do and which cards can I use to do it? This may require using three or more colors, but you can always drop cards if it's to taxing on your game. But don't get to carried away, the deck still needs balance. I've seen too many decks fail because all they did was one thing and couldn't compensate for an opponent's common card deck.

Don't get caught up in the theme. Next I decide which cards I can't live without (whether or not they go with the theme). For instance you may want a deck that forces your opponent to run out of cards and thus lose the game.

You might choose *Howling Mines*, *Braingeyzers* and *Millstones* for starters. But you love the *Demonic Tutor's* ability to give you the card you need when you need it. Go ahead and play these cards if they win for you.

Next I choose my defense/creatures (most of my decks' use mostly spells and artifacts). With the colors I'm playing, which creatures are the most beneficial? What's its casting cost in relation to its power, toughness and special ability? An example of a great creature/defense card is the *Will O' the Wisp*. Sure, it's only a 0/1, but it flies, regenerates and only costs one black mana. That's a bargain. *Granite Gargoyles* are another favorite of mine (one red and two colorless, flying, 2/2, and you can pump up its toughness).

After this you need to cut your deck down to size. I suggest that your theme

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comprise no more than fifteen cards, and at least ten creatures. I usually play with no more than 64 cards in my decks. I tend to have 10-15 creatures, my theme ranging from 5-15 cards and my "can't live without" cards (*Black Lotus*, *Mox stones*, *Counterspells*, etc...). Try to have a little over 1/3 land. I usually use 1/3 plus two. Now try it on a buddy and see what happens.

And remember these tips: Never, ever count your Mox stones as land (this also goes for *Lotuses*, *Sol Rings*, etc...). Never counter a *Demonic Tutor* or any card that allows your opponent to grab another card; counter the one he grabs. Try not to counter a *Channel* (again, wait for the upcoming spell). Last but not least, never underestimate the power of a *Scryb Sprite* (*Giant Growth*, *Blood Lust*, *Berserk*...it hurts).

The deck construction rules used at **Origins '94** were identical to those found in the **Pocket Players Guide**, with the exception of the removal of the *Dingus Egg* and *Gauntlet of Might* from the restricted list. Also, entrants were not allowed to use any of the M:tG expansions (**Arabian Nights**, **Antiquities**, **Legends**), only Alpha printing cards, Beta's, Unlimited and Revised.

Artifacts	Black
Black Lotus	Demonic Tutor
Disrupting Scepter x2	Hypnotic Specter
Forcefield	Mind Twist x4
Ivory Tower	Nightmare
Mox Emerald	Royal Assassin x2
Mox Jet	Sengir Vampire
Mox Pearl	Sorceress Queen x2
Mox Ruby	Terror x2
Mox Sapphire	Will-O-The-Wisp x2
Sol Ring	
The Rack x3	
Blue	Green
Ancestral Recall	Regrowth
Braingeyser	
Control Magic x2	Red
Counterspell x3	Disintegrate
Mahamoti Djinn x2	Fireball
Phantom Monster	
Wheel of Fortune	
Timetwister	
Time Walk	
Land	
Badlands x3	
Island x3	
Swamp x4	
Tropical Island x2	
Underground Sea x4	
Volcanic Island x3	

Now you may look at this deck and say, "That's the deck that won? I could beat that!"

You may be right. This deck didn't win because it's anything special. It won because it's solid, and because I got some lucky breaks. But out of the opponents I faced I know that I won because it's a solid deck. There's a little something for every occasion. And I didn't get caught with cards I couldn't use.

In parting I would like to thank Carol and Dave Turrietta (for a paycheck to buy cards with), Erik Yapple and Jim Pinto (for not letting my win go to my head) and Emily Jaime (for putting up with me always playing Magic).

I would also like to thank Dave Williams and D. J. Trindle for the countless tips on the game, and Don Smith, my opponent in the finals, for being a great adversary and a great Magic player.

Heavy Gear: Showdown in the Badlands Reviewed by Darren Holt

This fast paced game is based on the **Heavy Gear RPG**, a mecha fighting game. **Heavy Gear** pits you against your opponent in mechanized battle armor on the Planet Terra in the Badlands, a desolate region near the planet's equator.

This is a fun, fast-paced two player game. If you like **Battletech**, you'll love **Heavy Gear**. The actual game only takes about 20-30 minutes to play and there is almost no setup time other than selecting your Mech.

Once both players have selected mechs, the action begins. You control all weapons systems and movement. Weapon systems range from "fire and forget" bazookas to unarmed punching to vibro blade attacks. Each mech controls ten different weapon systems. The turn sequence is structured so that you can sacrifice power for faster attacks, but the game seems to favor the powerful mechs over the faster ones.

There is a considerable amount of strategy involved in the game, and being a straightforward slugger will end your mech-piloting days quickly. It's often more important to do rather unspectacular attacks that will simply shake up your opponent in order to set up a later attack that can deliver a devastating blow.

When you first play it is recommended that you briefly go over the rules before you play and then refer back to them as often as necessary. This is because the rules are a bit confusing at first and become much clearer after you've actually

played once. The game in fact is quite simple and easy to play.

All of the materials for the game (the cards, the mech sheets, and the tokens) are printed on glossy card stock which is appropriate for the genre and adds to the atmosphere of the game. Unfortunately, it is not in a punch format and you must cut out individual counters.

What it lacks in counters it more than makes up for in packaging. The box it comes in is a videocassette box; this adds both flavor and portability to the game and is by far the best packaging concept around.

Ianus Publications is very enthusiastic in its game support and provides both mail and net addresses for user support. They also promise several expansion sets. These include customized decks with new cards and expansion rules for multiplayer free-for-alls and team play.

Overall this game is very entertaining. It receives high marks for its simple and yet engaging combat system and allows for hours of enjoyment.

Flights of Fantasy Destini Productions Preview

Destini Productions will soon deliver a card game that will appeal to 'Fantasy Art collectors, Literary Enthusiasts and Gamers'. The basic set will have 90 cards, divided into 3 subsets (sci-fi, fantasy, and horror). Each set has a story line on the card backs. Corresponding with the story lines is the "Flights of Fantasy" Game.

The Flights of Fantasy game will use a new game system that allows the players to "engage in quick and fierce battle based on the storyline concept." There will be several different ways to play. Each box of Flights of Fantasy will have three complete core sets (that's 9 subsets).

The highlight of this game is the card art, produced exclusively by well-known illustrator Ed Beard Jr. (Magic, Jyhad, etc.). Each piece of card art was created to the specifications of the storyline. In addition to the core set of cards, there will be a special "Gallery" set that will comprise Ed Beard Jr's work in the past, and a look at the work of his top students. There will also be special insert autographed and prize cards. □

Towers in Time Thunder Castle Games Game Preview

In the beginning those that could master going between dimensions thought of it as a novelty. Time and place were no longer barriers for them. There were worlds to discover, creatures to see and most importantly magic to master. Every time in the history of our world and of others was waiting to be visited. But with all these things to keep them busy there was one thing they did not forget: Power. At first there was plenty to go around; the few Wizards that spent their time in the Dimensions shared the wealth. The artifacts and other magical items were plentiful and easily obtained. The races were easy to befriend and eager to help.

After a while there were so many Wizards on the other side that something changed. There was much less power to go around, but it was craved by all. Soon, it was easier to take from others than to find it on your own. Soon the only place to hide was in great magical towers that they built between dimensions. It took fantastic power to hold open the dimension and it took even greater power to invade it. But, it was done. The object

was to bring down the Great Shields that held the domain, making it collapse. But most of all it allowed the rival Wizard to pillage the spoils of the battle and escape back through the channel.

You have learned to channel this magical power for your own bidding. Power: that's what it's all about. Now you travel to the other side. Maybe it's to track down the legend of some lost artifact. Maybe it's getting back at an old rival. Or perhaps it's just to prove who's the biggest on the block.

As you cross over, your domain forms. You channel incredible energy into the shields that hold open your portal. Five shields hold open your domain. If they collapse you must transport out immediately. Everything that stays behind is lost to oblivion.

You have contacted your allies. Other races on this side are eager to come to the aid of a powerful Wizard. A few owe you favors for "little" jobs you did for them in the past. And there are a few great monsters that you have bound for those little emergencies when they might come in handy.

Now you must start building your towers. As you look around your trained vision sees the sources you need. A cloud

filled with energy will make an excellent source for your first tower.

You channel it into your domain and start your first tower. With the energy out of the cloud you manage to transport in your first follower. The Minor Elemental moves into the tower. It is important to bring them in the right order. The Dimensions are no place to upset the balance. If you aren't careful, you could bring the whole domain down around you. Rules must be obeyed.

Utilization of resources is important. You have learned to watch the lines of power carefully. Use what you have to its greatest potential. Now you can prepare for the final assault.

Each edition will focus on a different place in time. Every edition is a limited print run. Once they're gone, they're gone forever. Cards will be sold in 54 card decks (\$6.95) and 8 card packs (\$1.45). The first edition will be available in November. The first three expansions (released every 3-4 months) will be: Greek, Zodiak, and Amazon editions. A national league is planned by Thunder Castle Games. □

Jyhad™ Cheat Sheet

Game Set Up

- Make a blood pool of thirty counters for each player, designate common blood bank of extra counters.
- Choose edge counter.
- Separate vampire cards and library cards. Shuffle both sets of cards and allow player to your right to cut the cards.
- Take ante from your library cards.
- Deal four vampire cards from your vampire deck and place them face down in the inactive region, set the other vampire cards in a pile (crypt) close by.
- Deal a hand of seven library cards and set the remaining library cards close at hand.
- Determine who goes first.

Turn and Action Phases

Phases and Actions	Card Needed	Tap Minion	Stealth at	Blockable*	Notes
A. Untap Phase					
B. Master Phase	X				only one card may be played
C. Minion Phase;					
Actions available;					
Hunt		X	+1	P&P	vampires that start the minion phase w/o blood must hunt.
Bleed		X	0	DA	
Call vote	X	X	0	P&P	vote card may include stealth
Employ retainer	X	X	+1	P&P	not considered a minion
Encounter Vampire in torpor (diablerie)	X	X	0	DA	in another methuselah's torpor
Encounter Vampire in torpor (rescue)		X	+1	P&P	in your own torpor
Equip minions	X	X	+1	P&P	
Take equipment from own minions		X	+1	P&P	minion taking the equipment taps, acting minion may take more than one equipment from same minion
Leave torpor		X	+1	P&P	if acting vampire is blocked no combat happens, instead blocking vampire may commit diablerie
Recruit ally	X	X	+1	P&P	considered a minion

Combat Phases: Actions that are blocked result in combat.

- Establish range by maneuver
- Choose strike
- Resolve strike
- Additional strikes (repeat 2&3)
- Press (repeat combat phases).

Combat Notes: Weapons: ranged weapons can be used at either long or short range, a weapon used to gain a maneuver must be used as a strike for that phase.

P&P: action can only be blocked by a minion of your prey or predator.

DA: action can only be blocked by a minion of the methuselah that the action is directed against.

Print	Type	Name	Rarity
☐	AB	B1 Planetary Shield	C
☐	AB	B2 Defensive Satellites - Planet Left	R
☐	AB	B2 Defensive Satellites - Planet Right	R
☐	AB	B3 Space Station	R
☐	AB	B4 Base Station	C
☐	A	B5 Growing Economy* (2920)	OOP
☐	B	C1 Boarding Party - Corporate Humans- Nelson	C
☐	A	C1 Boarding Party - Corporate Humans(9800)	OOP
☐	A	C3 Engineer - Indiringan - Shoulders (9800)	OOP
☐	B	C3 Engineer - Indiringan - No Shoulders	C
☐	B	C4 Communications Officer Voldigas	R
☐	AB	C4 Fighter Pilot - Human	R
☐	B	C5 Weapons Officer - Scorpead	R
☐	A	C5 Weapons Officer - Bolaar (2920)	OOP
☐	AB	C6 Captain - Mazgar	R
☐	AB	E1 Krebiz Pseudo Capsule	U
☐	AB	E1 Probe	C
☐	AB	E1 Shield Refit	C
☐	AB	E1 Cargo	C
☐	AB	E2 Phaser Refit	C
☐	AB	E3 Heavy Shield Refit	R
☐	AB	E4 Heavy Phaser Refit	R
☐	B	E6 Krebiz Sabot Sequencer	R
☐	AB	E6 Bolaar Deflection Transfer Device	R
☐	AB	E7 Argonian Strobe	R
☐	AB	H1 Time Warp	C
☐	AB	H2 Ion Storm	C
☐	AB	H3 Pulsar	C
☐	AB	H4 Nova - Effect Right	R
☐	AB	H4 Nova - Effect Left	R
☐	AB	H5 Ion Storm	R
☐	AB	H6 Supernova	R
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☐	AB	M3 Shield Fiend	R
☐	AB	M4 Space Dragon	R
☐	AB	M5 Large Phaser Eel	R
☐	AB	M6 Invenco Guardian	R
☐	AB	O1 Breakdown	C
☐	AB	O2 Illness	R
☐	AB	O3 Forced Retreat	C
☐	AB	O4 Injury	R
☐	AB	O5 Breakdown	R
☐	AB	O5 Forced Retreat	R
☐	B	O6 Bribe Pirate	R
☐	AB	O7 Suprise Attack	R
☐	A	O8 Bribe Pirate (2920)	OOP
☐	B	R/C1 Science Officer - Indirigan	C
☐	A	R/C3 Science Officer - Voldigar (9800)	OOP
☐	AB	R/C2 Doctor - Krebiz	C
☐	A	R/C4 Marine - Corporate Human Ship (2920)	OOP
☐	B	R/C4 Marine - Corporate Human Matson	R
☐	AB	R/E2 Tractor	C
☐	AB	R/E2 Transporter	VC
☐	AB	R/E3 Shuttlecraft - Facing Left	C
☐	AB	R/E3 Shuttlecraft - Facing Right	C
☐	AB	R/E5 Fighter - Argonian Wind	R

☐	AB	R/O4 Repair Delivery	R
☐	AB	S1 Fleet Freighter - Facing Left	C
☐	AB	S1 Fleet Freighter - Facing Right	C
☐	AB	S1 Krebiz Light Capsule	VC
☐	AB	S1 Krebiz Medium Capsule	C
☐	AB	S2 Fleet Tug	C
☐	AB	S2 Krebiz Battle Capsule	U
☐	AB	S2 Krebiz Clipper Frigate Facing Left	C
☐	AB	S2 Krebiz Clipper Frigate Facing Right	C
☐	AB	S2 Krebiz Heavy Capsule	C
☐	AB	S3 Argonian Frigate - Shadow Left	C
☐	A	S3 Argonian Frigate - Shadow Right (9800)	OOP
☐	AB	S3 Bolaar Light Pirate Raider	U
☐	AB	S3 Krebiz Pincer Destroyer	C
☐	AB	S4 Argonian Destroyer	C
☐	A	S4 Krebiz Mandible Light Cruiser-No Planet (5840)	OOP
☐	B	S4 Krebiz Mandible Light Cruiser-Blue Planet	U
☐	AB	S4 Vakinean Light Cruiser	R
☐	AB	S5 Argonian Light Cruiser	C
☐	A	S5 Bolaar Pirate Raider ** (2920)	OOP
☐	A	S5 Krebiz Claw Heavy Cruiser-Small Planet (9800)	OOP
☐	B	S5 Krebiz Claw Heavy Cruiser-Dust Trails	C
☐	AB	S6 Argonian Heavy Cruiser	C
☐	AB	S7 Argonian Battlecruiser - Star on Right	R
☐	A	S7 Argonian Battlecruiser - Star on Left (2920)	OOP
☐	AB	T/H2 Plasma Field	C
☐	AB	T1 Large Asteroid	C
☐	AB	T1 Small Moon	C
☐	AB	T2 Biruk's Comet	C
☐	AB	T2 Kalin's Small Red Nebula	C
☐	AB	T3 Benakis Asteroid Belt	C
☐	AB	T3 Moon	U
☐	AB	T4 Moon - Aldibrik Munitions Plant	C
☐	AB	T4 Small Planet - Bolaar IV	C
☐	A	T4 Indig's Comet (2920)	OOP
☐	AB	T5 Planet - Candor II	R
☐	AB	T5 Small System - Cramannerak System	C
☐	AB	T5 Homecloud Nebula	R
☐	AB	T5 Planet - Vectra Pripe	C
☐	AB	T6 Asteroid Field	U
☐	AB	T6 Black Hole	C
☐	B	T6 Ringed Gas Giant - Vorn	R
☐	A	T6 Ringed Gas Giant - Vorn - Probe Telemetry (2920)	OOP
☐	B	T6 Sochess Comet	R
☐	AB	T7 System - Argo System	R
☐	AB	T8 System - Acandig System	R
☐	AB	Point Symbols	U

KEY:

Print Run: A=Alpha print run, B=Beta print run

Type: (type/power): B=Base, C=Crew, E=Equipment, H=Hazard, M=Monster, O=Obstacle, R=Reaction, S=Ship, T=Terrain

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Ex-Bauhaus Freelancer
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Ex-Mishima Freelancer
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Exorcise Disease
Exorcise Evil Thoughts
Exorcise Infection
Exorcise Poison
Exorcise Wound
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Hatamoto
Heavy Fog
Heretic
Hidden in the Shadows
Hussar
Infantry
Initiative
Inquisitor
Inspired
Joy of Victory
Legionnaire of Semai
Lesser Domination
Lesser Hypnosis
Lesser Telepathy
Lucky Shot
Machinator
Malfunction!
Martian Banshee
Mind Wall
Mortificator
Necromutant
Out of Ammo
Presence
Proficiency
Powerful Blow
Radar Scanner
Resist Elements
Resist Pain
Retreat!
Reverberating Sharpener
Revisor
Sacred Warrior
Samurai
Screaming Legionnaire
Sea Lion
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Spiked Barricade
Strength of Will
Strike
Sunset Striker
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Take Cover
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Terror
Ticker

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Bacteria Grenade
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Blessed Vestal Laura
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Capitol Sword of Honor
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Centurion
Changeling Empathy
Cherniman
Citadel of Algeroth
Citadel of Demnogonis
Citadel of Ilian
Citadel of Muawijhe
Citadel of Semai
Clansman Claymore
Combat Warhead
Command
Control Mind
Corrupt Shield
Cowardice
Curator
Curator Sword
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Deform
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Dimensional Warp
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Discovered
Disrupt Power
Distort
Doomed
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Exorcise Self
Exorcism
Exorcism Empathy
Expedite Request
Fay & Klaus
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Forced March
Fortune of War
Foxhole
Framed!
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Improve Self
Indigestion
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Pretorian Stalker
Prove Your Valor
Psycho Scanner
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Razide
Recalled
Repentance
Reputation
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Ruthless Efficiency
Sabotage!
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Sean Gallagher
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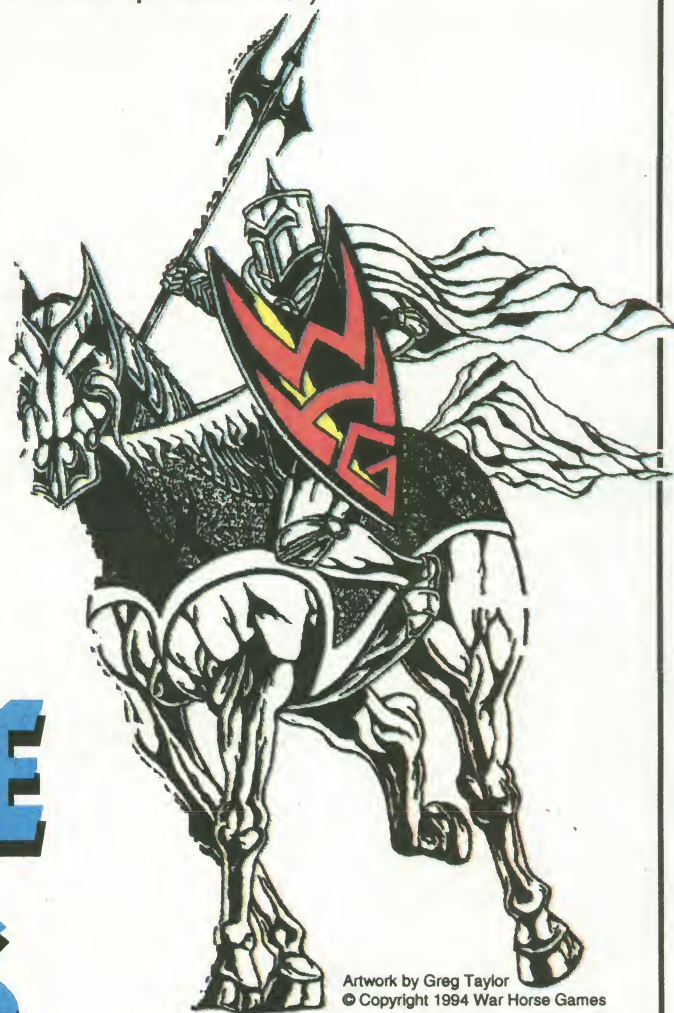
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☐	97	Dr. Mordenheim	.Hero
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Abbreviations:

Rlm = Realm	Hold = Holding
CSpl = Clerical Spell	WSpl = Wizards Spell
Itm = Magic Item	Art = Artifact
Ally = Ally	Hero = Hero
Mon = Monster	Wiz = Wizard

NAME	Rarity .#				
☐ Airy Water	U . .132	☐ Humble	U . .049	☐ Sea Elf Galley	U . .062
☐ Ant Lion	U . .149	☐ Iceburg	C . .056	☐ Sea Elf Guard	U . .064
☐ Armor	U . .102	☐ Invisibility	R . .129	☐ Sea Elf Gunboat	R . .061
☐ Ashar, the Assassin	R . .033	☐ Karak Dive Bombers	R . .143	☐ Sea Elf marines	U . .063
☐ Assault with Stone	R . .100	☐ Karak Militia	U . .145	☐ Sea Nymph	U . .067
☐ Ater's Gargoyle	R . .011	☐ Karak Regulars	C . .144	☐ Seal	U . .004
☐ Ater's Iron golem	R . .011	☐ Kill	R . .126	☐ Shield of protection	R . .028
☐ Ater's Stone Golem	R . .009	☐ Lake	C . .054	☐ Siren	R . .068
☐ Ax of Might	R . .030	☐ Lars' Norse Raiders	U . .045	☐ Snake	U . .002
☐ Barbarian Raiders	U . .048	☐ Levitate Tower	U . .134	☐ Solid ground	U . .104
☐ Barbarian Thralls	U . .047	☐ Lightning Bug	R . .147	☐ Stone Giant	R . .120
☐ Boots of Speed	R . .032	☐ Lightning Reflexes	U . .130	☐ Stone Skin	R . .101
☐ Bow of the glade	R . .031	☐ Mad Norseman, The	C . .046	☐ Strength of stone	U . .103
☐ Breathe Fire	U . .084	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .071	☐ Summon Skeletons	U . .123
☐ Cloaker	U . .150	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .072	☐ Summon spectre	U . .122
☐ Cloud	C . .138	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .073	☐ Summon Wraith	U . .121
☐ Cloud giant	R . .142	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .093	☐ Sword of Swiftess	R . .026
☐ Cone of Cold	U . .058	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .094	☐ Thunderhead	C . .135
☐ Crown of Command	R . .029	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .095	☐ Tortoise	U . .005
☐ Death Knights of Mranth	R . .039	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .117	☐ Uknek, Karak Prince	R . .146
☐ Desert	C . .078	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .118	☐ Ulath Healers	R . .035
☐ Destroy	R . .128	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .119	☐ Ulathian Sea Dragon	R . .074
☐ Diffuse	U . .127	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .139	☐ Ulgar Dwarf Cannons	U . .112
☐ Dispel	U . .131	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .140	☐ Ulgar Dwarf Catapult	U . .111
☐ Disrupt Transporting	U . .059	☐ Mjorn Elemental	C . .141	☐ Ulgar Dwarven Dragon-Flyer	R . .109
☐ Drown	R . .065	☐ Mjorn Elf Cavalry	U . .042	☐ Ulgar Dwarven Home Guard	U . .110
☐ Eagle	U . .003	☐ Mjorn Elf Courts	R . .043	☐ Ulgar Dwarven Militia	C . .116
☐ Empower tower	U . .052	☐ Mjorn Elf Death Dealers	U . .044	☐ Ulgar Dwarven Prince	R . .115
☐ Essence Enhancement	U . .050	☐ Mjorn Elf Prince	R . .041	☐ Ulgar Dwarven Rifleman	U . .114
☐ Falcon	R . .001	☐ Mjorn Healers	U . .036	☐ Ulgar Mountain Dwarves	U . .113
☐ Fire Beetle	R . .085	☐ Mountain	C . .098	☐ Valley	C . .108
☐ Fire Drake	U . .088	☐ Mranth Dragon	R . .096	☐ Valley of Fire	C . .075
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☐ Flaming Sword	R . .027	☐ Mranth Orc Mauraunders	U . .092	☐ Wall of Ice	U . .057
☐ Flare Beetle	U . .148	☐ Mranth Orcs	C . .091	☐ Wall of Stone	U . .099
☐ Flare	U . .081	☐ Mranth Troll	R . .038	☐ Wand of Fire	R . .022
☐ Flood	U . .060	☐ Mroar Phoenix	R . .087	☐ Wand of Frost	R . .021
☐ Fly	U . .133	☐ Mroar Salamander	U . .086	☐ Wand of Lightning	R . .024
☐ Flying Sandals	U . .133	☐ Necklace of Elements	R . .025	☐ Wand of Stone	R . .023
☐ Forest	R . .017	☐ Orb of Dopmar	R . .015	☐ Water Breathing	U . .066
☐ Forest Fire	C . .105	☐ Orb of Nulification	R . .013	☐ Wind	C . .137
☐ Frog	C . .077	☐ Orb of Power	R . .014	☐ Wolverine	U . .006
☐ Gate to Aegea	U . .008	☐ Orb of weakness	R . .016	☐ Zehper	C . .136
☐ Gate to Mranth	R . .012	☐ Order of Light	R . .040		
☐ Gate to Mranth	R . .097	☐ Pirate Ship	U . .070		
☐ Great Strategist, the	R . .034	☐ Pirates	U . .069		
☐ Heal	C . .051	☐ Plain	C . .107		
☐ Hill	C . .106	☐ Raise Dead	U . .124		
☐ Holy Shield	R . .020	☐ Ring of shooting stars	R . .019		
☐ Holy Sword	R . .019	☐ River	C . .055		
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KEY:

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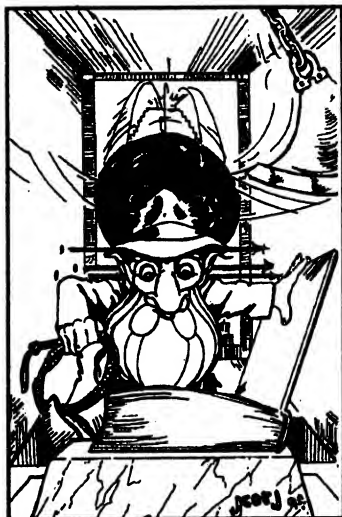
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When Will You Rage?
White Wolf Studios
Paperback Anthology
Reviewed by D.J. Trindle

What you bring away from this anthology will depend to a large extent on your initial attitude towards it. If you're looking for nifty ideas for your current **World Of Darkness™** story, or are moderately fascinated with the **WoD** in and of itself, you're likely to get quite a bit out of it. Not

Closer Look

Reviews of Games and Related Products.

only have all the authors quite clearly been given the parameters of the world and its denizens, but there is at least one appearance by a fairly well-known **WoD** resident. Furthermore, everybody's been given a location (San Francisco, official urban sponsor of the **World of Darkness**) and a time (on or about Halloween).

On the other hand, if you're looking purely for a book of short stories, you may be disappointed. I must confess that the two collections I'd read immediately before **Rage** were **Dangerous Visions** and **Borderlands 3**. Realizing that any collection would be outclassed by these two, however, I restrained myself from dashing off a scorching, cathartic critique on the word processor and instead fetched the two books this ought to be compared to: **Drums Around the Fire** and **The Beast Within**. These are, respectively, the previous **Werewolf** and **Vampire** short story collections, and presumably labored under the same restrictions as **Rage**.

When I came up for air, I was able to confirm my suspicions: this is the weakest of the three anthologies. Many of the stories in **Rage** seem not to end, but rather just to stop. I suspect this may have roots in the anthology's roleplaying heritage—in a roleplaying environment, it's possible to leave story threads lying around for a while, then weave them back in at a narratively strategic time. Not so in a work of fiction. You must nail a short story shut, and several of the authors fail to do so. Is the format straitjacketing people? Is the editor demanding cuts to keep the page count reasonable? I dunno. Nevertheless, as a short story anthology **When Will You Rage?** is only passable. I was a bit disappointed.

Lest you get the impression I tore up my copy and lined the catbox

with it, let me reiterate: there are lots of good storytelling ideas in here. Furthermore, there are a couple of very good to outstanding stories (I consider Alara Rogers's "Calley's Story" worth the price of admission all by its lonesome). We've got two new tribes, a couple of vampires, scads of Black Spiral Dancers as heavies, and a furred, clawed cast of thousands. If you're running a **Werewolf: the Apocalypse** chronicle, or even a somehow-related roleplaying game, this one is worth a look.

The Kingdoms of Kalamar
Kenzer and Company
RPG Supplement
Reviewed by Scott Johnson

How many times have you heard "Oh no, not another game system!"? Do you shudder at the thought of learning a new set of rules?

I already own a few dozen RPG systems and, frankly, I'm not in the market for any new ones. You can only reinvent the wheel so many times.

Besides, I like the systems I'm currently using. What I really need is some good fresh material to supplement those systems.

Not to kiss up to the editor of SHADIS, but one reason I enjoy this magazine is that it's also packed full of tons of useful material which I can readily use in my campaign.

The Kingdoms of Kalamar is the first in a series of products which will outline the world of *Tellene*. The beauty of this product is that it is non-system specific.

The review copy I received came in a durable ziplock style bag. I knew that I was going to fall in love with this supplement the moment I read the opening comments by the presi-

dent of Kenzer and Company, David S. Kenzer. Here was a fellow gamer who shared my frustrations and thoughts. As David explained, **The Kingdoms of Kalamar** was designed to be one that "we would like to buy...One that is realistic, extremely detailed, easy to reference during play, reasonably priced and has a superior map."

When you purchase *KoK* you will receive 2 full color maps showing a large portion of the world of *Tellene*, 2 source books, and a hexagonal measuring tool for use with the map. First the map. Printed on two sheets 24" x 36" gloss stock, these maps alone are worth the price.

The maps are beautiful and rival those of any other company on the market, including TSR. You will also appreciate the fact that they are printed on a heavy, durable stock which should survive all the abuses that gamemasters and players will likely subject them to over the years.

The artwork and detail on the maps are excellent. The creators opted to give the world maps a nice view-from-space feel which gives a feeling of reality. There are no markings specific for game use on the maps; that is what the map tool is for. The map tool (as I like to call it) is simply a clear sheet of plastic with small and large hexes and conversion charts so the gamemaster will be able to chart mileage and movement over the world map.

The two world books, while not as visually stimulating as the world map, have a rugged feel to them and are laid out nicely. The writers opted to use artwork sparingly to make room for more source material and handy reference charts and tables.

The first book, **Sourcebook of the Sovereign Lands**, introduces you to the world of *Tellene*, which

like other fantasy worlds is inhabited by Humans, Elves, Dwarfs and Hobgoblins.

The latter having established a Hobgoblin Kingdom which constantly threatens the civilized lands. The overview of the world is complete with a chronology of events leading up to the current time on Tellene.

The large map is broken down into a more manageable size and each of the **Kingdoms of Kalamar** is detailed including history of the people, rulers of the kingdoms, and some politics which will add to any campaign played in Tellene.

Each section ends with a write up on the distinct topographical features on the map including woodlands, mountain ranges, hills, bodies of water, rivers etc. The book ends with a city quick reference chart, movement charts, character place of origin tables and a couple of pages of

adventure seeds, news and rumors to get you off and running.

The second book, **Mythos of the Divine and Worldly**, offers something most game worlds normally wait to provide or slip in piece by piece with each supplement: a complete overview of the gods and religions of the world.

Now normally this is not my cup of tea. Powerful gods and divine beings seldom if ever play a role in any of my game campaigns, so I went into this book kind of jaded. I ended up pleasantly surprised. While the book does detail information about the many gods of the world, it does much more, detailing the religions and how they affect the political and social structure of the world as well as detailing the priests of each religion. I came away from the read with hundreds of ideas for adventures, and if I were a priest character I would throw away my

priests' handbook and pick up this one (if the GM will let you at it). As usual the product offers much more than I can talk about in these few lines,

I can say this with utmost certainty. If you are a game master looking for a good world setting to run your game in or a world builder with your own campaign already going The Kingdoms of Kalamar offers you a refreshingly generic view and more than your money's worth. I highly recommend it.

Castle Falkenstein
R. Talsorian Games
RPG System
Reviewed by E. Ken Cox

It's time to get out all of those wonderful old books that are the progenitors of all Sci-fi/Fantasy/Mystery books everywhere, such standards as *The Adventures of Sher-*

lock Holmes, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. These are the true source books for what has the potential to be one of the most exciting games in the industry today, **Castle Falkenstein**.

Castle Falkenstein is role playing in the worlds and time of these great authors. Role-playing in the wonderful age of steam driven machines, brave adventures, evil geniuses, and all of the pomp and pageantry of an age long past. An age when men were gentlemen and women were ladies, in a time when nothing was impossible. Add into the mix, magic and the creatures of Faerie and you have the fantastic world of **Castle Falkenstein**.

With its incredible artwork and layout the book fairly transports you into the realms of the world, while not taking away from the exchange of information. While some may find



One small portion of the Kingdoms of Kalamar™ full color maps.

it difficult working within the boundaries of this format. I personally find it an exhilarating change to what has become the Standard Format. Information on the world itself is presented as individual letters on each area or subject. This makes it very easy to find what you are looking for while still providing for a wonderful read.

The book is clearly divided into two parts, with one half on slick paper and the other on Parchment. The slick section tells the tale of Tom Olan and his adventures in the world of **Castle Falkenstein**. Tom's transformation from game designer to super spy is a great read, and reason enough to purchase this book. It provides information on the political societies, military and races. This comprises the general world information required for adventuring in **Castle Falkenstein**.

The parchment section presents the rules and system for running the game. The system provided is one that I can really give the title of new. There is no character sheet. Instead the player keeps track of his characters actions in a diary. Advancement is through use of skills and a wonderful system of action resolution that uses a deck of cards over the popular use of dice, mostly because no real gentlemen or lady would be caught dead using dice. This card system and the diary could be simplified even further to a simple list of skills and basic information on the character. This information is what is truly required for the use of the deck system. But please, the diary is the most incredible item ever added into the players list of useful tools. Do not toss it away without reason. It would really cheapen the Falkenstein experience.

This section also provides some of the best GM information in a source book I have ever seen. With information on the creation of steam age fiction, vital elements of melodrama, and a wonderful collection of basic character types; not to mention ideas for truly diabolical machines, this is sure to be one of those dog-eared books in your library whether you play Falkenstein or not.

So, we get back to the main question. Are you ready for **Castle Falkenstein**? This game is sure to be one of the biggest sensations in the industry. I personally will be looking forward to exploring the depths with Captain Nemo and the clouds with Phileas Fogg. A sure-fire system with

a fantastic world of adventure: isn't that just what we have all been looking for?

Bloodshadows
West End Games
RPG System Setting
Reviewed by John J. Wick

I have always found that I can judge an RPG by one factor: enthusiasm. Not the game's, but mine.

When I read through the first few pages of **Bloodshadows**, my mind was simmering. By the time I finished the third chapter, I was ready to roll. I wanna run this game!

Every page gave me another story. Every PC race was loaded with potential. I just gotta get these stories out! Here, let me explain.

Bloodshadows is part of *West End Game's Master Book* series. Much like the **Hero System** and **GURPS**, there is one set of rules (the **Master Book**, itself) and a series of world books complete with rules that are specific to the world. For those of you familiar with **Torg** and **Shatterzone** you will recognize the streamlined game system, including the incredibly nifty Master Deck.

The **Master Book System** is very simple, but it includes many quiet little rules that the Gamemaster must look out for to catch the full impact of the game. The emphasis here is on Drama. Every rule moves the Gamemaster and Players toward making more heroic actions, valiant, breathtaking escapes and the dangerous deeds of derring-do! (Essentially, it encourages Players to do more than just hack at their enemies.)

Here's how it works. The Players each get a hand of cards from the Master Deck. These cards can include Action cards (which give the Player a bonus to their actions), Adrenaline cards (which give the Player a major bonus to any physical action), and Willpower cards (which give a big bonus to any mental actions).

But they also includes some slightly trickier cards: The Double Cross card gives you a big bonus to any action that directly betrays the rest of the party. The Leadership card allows you to play your card on other people's actions. And the Martyr card allows your Character to succeed at any action...at the cost of the Character's life.

The whole game system is like this. It really encourages the participants to get involved in the game, and to make each action something to remember. As for the world, oh boy, here we go.

Fantasy Noir is the catch phrase here, and it is one of the most unique settings in gaming. If you've ever seen the movie **Cast a Deadly Spell**, you've got the right idea. The book focuses on the cities of the world. These are the sprawling cityscapes of the gumshoe detective with a dash of sorcery thrown in for flavor. Here, a Private Eye must rely on wits, fists, and a good deal of occult knowledge to pull a living out of these streets.

Succubi sell themselves on the street corners and sorcerers of immense power and influence sit in sky-high buildings smoking stogies and trapping demons.

The mood is right, and the atmosphere is thick to quote the language of the genre. This is Mickey Spillaine meets Steven King, and you're gonna love it.

The world is populated with Humans, Vampires, Werewolves and their ilk, but the races unique to this world are so exciting, I don't wanna play humans, vampires, or werewolves. For example, you can play the shape-shifting, bone eating **Orris**, or maybe the thuggy and companion-dependent **Hugor**, or even the ghostly **Elkist**. These are but a few of the new races waiting for you in **Bloodshadows**.

All new. All original. All just waiting for stories. I can just imagine running a group of these guys through a story, and frankly, I just can't wait.

The only criticism I can find in the game is its price. But for thirty dollars you get the Master Book, the **Bloodshadows World Book**, the **Drama Deck** and two high-quality ten sided dice. Not really such a bad deal, and if you already have the Master Book system, you can pick up the **World Book** alone at a substantial reduction in price.

Just as an incidental note, I usually ignore the actual game system when I get excited about a new game world, mostly because its been so long since I have really wanted to use dice. However, the Master Book's game system is so slick, I may actually use a game system again. You have to play this system to believe it.

Bloodshadows is something that is so unique on the market. It's not a genre munching game with punk rock elves and cyber dwarves. It's special because it's true to the genre it is trying to represent while at the same time being in a genre all it's own.

Nephilim
Chaosium Inc.
RPG System Setting
Reviewed by John J. Wick

I had a lot of trouble writing a review for **Nephilim**, and it wasn't because it isn't a good game. It's a great game.

No, the reason I found such difficulty in doing a review was because each time I finished a page, it read like a commentary on the gaming industry. And that's just what **Nephilim** will do for you. It will raise Questions in your mind about everything you believe in. This game is not for those who are dogmatic. If you are rigidly religious, you will be offended. If you believe that playing a tall, thin, pointy-eared human who lives forever is playing a non-human character, you will be turned off by this game.

Nephilim is for those that are looking for something completely different in a role-playing game. If you're tired of romantic gothic tragic super cool vampires and wasted burned-out industrial hyper-cybernetic punk rock elves, then **Nephilim** is for you.

The game uses elements of *Chaosium's* tried and true game system that fans of **Call of Cthulhu**, **Erlric**, and **Runequest** will be familiar with. It's much like **AD&D** with much more flexibility, much more realistic combat and a percentile based skill system.

And that's where the conventional ends. The rest of the game is like nothing you have seen before. Get ready, folks. This one's gonna be dangerous.

Imagine that everything you know is wrong. Science is just an illusion for systems of magic that are so powerful that human minds can't conceive of them.

History is a lie. Everything that think you know about history has been fabricated to keep you in the dark to what is really going on. You see, intelligent life began on this earth when the Saurians (the

dinosaurs) built their great cities billions of years ago. They were fantastically intelligent and possessed psychic abilities and sorcerous talents that humanity never even imagined could exist.

Their civilization fell when the meteor hit, and that gave rise to the next great race. No, not humanity. The Nephilim. They are beings of pure energy with no corporal form to speak of. They are philosophers and sorcerers. And creators.

Yep. You guessed it. They created mankind. Not God. Not Yahweh. Not anybody else, either. Here's some more truth for you.

- Atlantis: the great Nephilim city.

- The Standing Stones: Tombs of the Nephilim.

- The Egyptian Gods: All distorted stories of the Nephilim battling for power.

- and Jesus: A Nephilim experiment gone renegade.

Those are just some of the truths waiting for you in this game. And so what kind of characters do you play? Enlightened humans seeking Nephilim destruction? No, no, no.

You play the **Nephilim**. You are one of the most powerful entities ever to walk the earth, using humanity to your own alien ends.

That's right. No elves, Dwarves, or Vulcans here. Nothing even resembling humanity. And believe me, folks. If you thought playing a vampire was tough, just wait to try to role-play something that doesn't even regard humanity as life.

Now you see why this game was so hard to review? It's a damn fine game. The rules are simple, allowing for greater role-playing and less roll-playing. The magic system is eloquent and sublime, reflecting the real-life works of classical magic theory.

The character generation system is one of the most fascinating and novel to come in a long, long time.

But it's going to be bugger hell to run. My players took one look at the premise and turned green. I've been running RPG's for a decade and a half, and even I was ambivalent about trying to run it.

So what I am trying to tell you folks is this: Nephilim is perhaps one of the most sophisticated role-playing games out there. It holds to no conventions. It challenges everything you know about RPG's, religion, science,

physics, philosophy, and humanity itself... and it's just a game.

And that's what makes it beautiful. (Look out, here comes the commentary)

Almost no-one outside of role-playing takes the industry seriously. To almost everyone who has ever played, it's a hobby, and that's about it. But there are some of us who would like to see role-playing become something more than a hobby.

When a professor asked one of my players the other day what she did on Saturday nights, she told him, "My friends and I tell stories." That, for me, was a real compliment to my games; because of my players, it's not just a game. We're telling stories—together.

Nephilim is taking a big risk. It is trying to make us take a step toward sophisticated role-playing. Take a step toward something called *Cooperative Storytelling*. We could either play it safe in our dark little dungeons, or we could step outside into the light and try something a bit more demanding.

It's up to me, as a gamemaster. It's up to you, as a player. It's all up to us.

Mutant Chronicles & Brotherhood Heartbreaker Hobbies & Games RPG and Supplement
Reviewed by Theresa Verity

Have you ever wanted to do the Bug-Hunt? Imagine running down darkened alleyways in your hardsuit, your gun targeted to the signature of your quarry, your heart racing... You're so close, you can feel it. But, whoa, look at your trusty sidearm, and check out that bug!

The gun looks as if it could blast a respectable hole through a modern battleship, and the bug looks to be the boogie-man from your nightmares!! Eeyow! Did you trip or what? You're not playing **Warhammer 40K**—you are in a game of **Mutant Chronicles**...

For years, I, and quite a few other gamers, had been waiting for a game such as this. Yes, we could have played other games; we did. However, no other role-playing game has this kind of feel to it—y'know, like **Warhammer 40K**. Have you ever wanted to take your miniatures games into a new realm? Well, I have. It's fun beating on your friends from across a table-top battlefield. However, with old role-players, one

misses something when the miniatures are one's only creative end.

I don't mean to pinhole **Mutant Chronicles** as a **Warhammer 40K** wanna-be RPG, not at all, but it's close enough to snatch a few players who have been waiting for **Games Workshop** to release a companion RPG for their **Warhammer 40K** line. **Mutant Chronicles** is much more than **Warhammer 40K**, and that is its saving grace.

First, I should try to convey the overall feeling of the game for those of you who got lost when I babbled before.

Mutant Chronicles is set in a dark future where corporations vie for control over galactic resources. Politics abound between these entities, and with other groups and organizations. There is a quasi-spiritual group trying to defend the masses against evil beings. The evil beings, of course, have an agenda they wish all to follow and actively press everyone to obey that agenda. Amid all these and other matters of everyday life, one has to worry about one's own neck.

In this game one has the Good Guys and the Bad Guys, but not with such a pronounced division, which is a nice touch. One has the Corporations: Capitol, Imperial, Mishima, Bauhaus and Cybertronic. Each has its good points as well as horrifically dark points. My advice: stay out of the darker areas. Each corporation has millions of employees, who all dress in company clothes, use company currency, eat company food, and watch company videos. Everything belongs to the corporation; everything. Employees rise and go to sleep all at prescribed times— their lives are dedicated to the Corporation.

For spiritual guidance, one may consort with the Brotherhood. Good Cardinal Nathaniel founded the sect as a response to the arrival of the Dark Legion. The Brotherhood commands respect from all persons, regardless of political or social affiliations. From the Brotherhood come the Inquisition, who are empowered to mete out instant justice upon the unholy. Next come the Dark Legion, who came into being via the Apostles. Each of the five Apostles, fashioned after deadly sins and other nasty stuff, was awakened by the actions of humanity. In a sense, all the suffering and strife caused by the Dark Legion can be traced back to a pile of bad deeds left unresolved.

Don't worry. Your future as an adventurer does not demand that your character be rolled up as a weenie!

There are guns for some of your troubles, and psi-magics for others. Chances are, your rolls being what they usually are, you'll have a character with a colorful background and a few handy skills. If you really luck out, you might have some sort of champion-type with a power AND the skills to match!

Overall, character generation is a little tedious, but the tedium pays off in making the character background better. Characters have six main character statistics: STR (Strength), MST (Mental Strength, willpower), PER (Personality, charisma, and physical looks), PHY (Physique, physical status), COR (Coordination, speed and agility) and INT (Intelligence). All stats have a range of one to twenty. One also has to figure out one's social standing, skills, and background, and that all happens in the next phase of the character generation process. Everyone starts at age 16 and rolls for adolescent skills and history. One then goes on to choose a background and roll dice to see how the character's life goes (being hired, fired, making contacts, etc.). Skills are assessed in a point-pool fashion. As the character's background increases, in increments of zero to four years, he gathers points that fit into skill sections. These skill sections are: Combat, Firearms, Communication, Movement, Technical and Special. These sections are further broken down (in a cascading fashion) into more specific skills. The points the character receives are specific to one pool, and can only be applied in that pool. When our gaming group generated characters, we waited until the end of the entire character generation process before we went back and spent the pools in the cascade areas.

The aforementioned process allows one to pick skills of levels appropriate to the character's background and history. All character generation stops when one of the following three situations occur: 1. There is nowhere else to go in the generation phase, 2. the character dies, or 3. the character hits a GM-determined age limit. The third option is solely dependent upon the GM. Our GM stopped the generation before the characters would start rolling for aging effects.

Social standing fluctuates all the time in generation, and can range from zero to ten. Ten is stinking rich, and zero gives the character the status of a low-life punk with the cash flow to buy clean underwear and a can of all-purpose vermin repellent.

Mind you, this is a severely abbreviated version of character generation, but you get a sense of all the intense history that is important and integral to the generation process. Don't become too depressed if your character looks like a kindergarten drop-out. A good GM and a little role-playing on your part will tend to boost his skills and value for future adventures.

Now that we know a little about how the character comes into being, what do we do in combat? No problem; combat is fairly fast. Movement and range are all based on grids. Each square equals roughly five feet. This is great if you like using miniatures, and want combat fought out visually. As far as movement is concerned (and figuring out line-of-sight(LOS)), I am reminded of Space Hulk. One's character has N amount of action points to either move or perform an action, and LOS is figured by lining up the centers of the attacking/defending minis; if anything blocks that line, then you don't have LOS.

Combat itself happens in stages, and begins with an initiative contest between all involved (re-rolling all ties). High rolls move first, and initiative trickles down to whoever rolled

the lowest, unless one waives one's right to one's turn to wait for a better time to act. An attack or defense maneuver is then launched in initiative order. Characters may parry attacks, attempt to avoid attacks, or combine actions (for the more cinematic types), all of which are determined by the action points they have available at the time of their action phase.

Also, keep in mind that this game employs critical successes and failures for both normal and magical combats. The tide of battle can still pivot on one good or bad roll. When a hit has been scored, unless the attack description states otherwise, roll to determine hit location. It should be noted that this game enforces modifiers for characters who absorb a certain amount of damage in either one limb or the entire body, regardless of the character's health in other areas of his body (e.g. your leg is damaged, and you move slower, or your arm is damaged, and weapons fired using that arm have penalties to your effective combat skill).

Spell casting and spell defense are all based on the character's MST rating. The spells themselves are part of an Art which the character studies. Each Art is different, and no spells

are shared between Arts. It should be noted that spells in **Mutant Chronicles** more closely resemble psionic abilities than traditional magical spells. Spells themselves are ranked in Magnitudes, each magnitude representing the power level of the spell. For every level of magnitude, the character temporarily loses four MST points (which are regained by rest) — thus making the character more vulnerable to attack. **Mutant Chronicles** is also one of the few games where a spell caster can actually die from mental exhaustion if he throws too much into a spell or casts spells too frequently. An interesting feature of spellcasters in this game is that most of them are not helpless when it comes to defending themselves by more mundane means.

More options for character generation, weapons, and spells are provided in **The Brotherhood**, the first **Mutant Chronicles** sourcebook. All of the information is specifically targeted towards those characters who are part of the Brotherhood. The beginning of the supplement gives a little more game history, which is perfectly slanted for Brotherhood characters. Farther along, it provides specific adolescent and special events charts to roll from, plus more jobs to

try for (such as Inquisitor). Towards the end, there is a listing of the weapons available for Brotherhood members, a few mission objectives, and more history to read.

The overall design of the rule book and Brotherhood sourcebook is quite good. Every so often, one sees glossy pages with very sharp color illustrations, and nicely placed black and white accents among the paragraphs. Unfortunately, in spots, it seems that the art is less of an ornament than a space-eater, but that's just my observation.

My biggest complaint is with the pricing of both books. The rule book costs \$24.95 at the local game shop, and for the graphics, that's not too bad. I just wish there was more verbal bang for my buck and not so much glitz. It would not have killed the writers to place more background on where Cardinal Nathaniel came from, the history of the world prior to immediately before the coming of the Dark Legion, or anything similar. The Brotherhood sourcebook wasn't too bad either, but again — there is too much valuable space taken up by pretty graphics. □

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Disks of Wondrous Power

Computer Game Reviews

Table Master Wintertree Software Gamemaster's Aid Reviewed by J.E. Pickett

"Ok, let's see. Turn to page 253 and roll 3 dice. Cross-reference your roll with subchart 15. If your Strength is greater than the number indicated on the chart, turn to page 19 and roll on subchart 10; otherwise, turn to page 104 and roll on subchart 3."

At one time or another, all of us have run across a problem like this one. Our games get so bogged down in dice rolls and chart referencing that the flow of the game starts to trickle and eventually stop. Whether you enjoy role-playing, war gaming, or even miniatures gaming, *Wintertree Software* has recently released a program for the IBM that you should pick up. If you are willing to take a few minutes of your time, you will never have to go paging through your manuals again.

Table Master uses an easy to understand pseudo-programming language that allows you to customize tables to your own specifications. Before the idea of a programming language turns you off to **Table Master**, let me give you an example of a line of code from one of the charts: *REDUCE Cost BY 20 PERCENT.*

Tough, isn't it? It may take you a few moments to map out your chart and a few more to actually type it in, but once you are done, you will save yourself and your friends a lot of time during the game.

The manual, though small, is very well written and takes you step-by-step through the table creation process. Once you have entered the table the way it appears in the book, you can easily go in and modify it to fit your own house rules or just the way

you think it ought to be. If you think your sword should cut off the bad guy's head on a 1-6 rather than a 1-3, change the table and make it fit. However, be warned; the other thing **Table Master** takes away is fudging the charts. If you make a hit location roll for the bad guy, your head will also be just as vulnerable. If you have a rules lawyer in the group, you can now make it so he can't argue with you. After all, it's right there on the computer screen. And computers never lie, right?

Table Master also comes with some generic charts already programmed in. Some of them are more useful than others, but on the whole they will give you an idea of what this program can do. Some of them can be used right away. Charts like the random jewelry generator or the horse description chart are extremely useful. If you want to know what such and such a horse looks like or what jewelry was in the small wooden box you just stole, not a problem. Just select the appropriate chart and hit enter. On the other hand, I wouldn't eat some of the pizzas the random pizza generator came up with (I usually prefer mine without the dirty socks).

Other nice features of **Table Master** include the ability to generate a running total on your chart and the ability to select the number of times a certain chart is run. Going back to the random jewelry chart, if you tell **Table Master** to create, say, four pieces of jewelry, it will give you a description of the jewelry including what it is made of, what it is, what (if any) jewels are to be found on it, and how much it is worth. After creating all four pieces of jewelry, it tells you at the bottom of the screen how much the total is worth. You can set the number of times the chart is run to anything you wish. If you want,

Table Master can create as many as 100 pieces of jewelry or just one. **Table Master** also allows you to enter a die roll as the number of times the chart is run. So, if you want 1d10 horse descriptions or 2d6 pizzas, you can do it directly through the program.

Overall, I think **Table Master** is a very useful product. It helps to simplify your life as a game master or wargamer a great deal. No more looking up this chart or that one and the game doesn't grind to halt while you look for that lost copy of the rules supplement you know is around here somewhere.

Alien Legacy Sierra Strategy Computer Game Reviewed by David Moyer

In the distant future, Terrans are expanding outworld. We are colonizing those planets and moons that can sustain life. Then, as we wait and watch, a probe of alien design enters our system. Scientists track it back along its projected flight path. The probe has come from Alpha Centauri! Finally, signs of other intelligent life. Scientists and politicians begin the scramble. We must contact these friendly aliens. An interplanetary transport is rerouted to intercept the probe and bring greetings and offerings of peace and friendship. As the transport approaches the probe, tragedy strikes. The probe fires technologically superior weapons at our unarmed ship, annihilating it. We are now at war with the first life found outside our system.

This is the premise of a new game from Sierra, **Alien Legacy**. You are the

captain of the Earth seedship U.N.S. Calypso. You have been in cryo-sleep for nearly fifty years. The game begins as preliminary probes return to the Calypso. You are brought out of cryo-sleep to discover you were not the first from Earth to arrive in the Beta Caeli star system. While you were asleep, technological advances were made in propulsion and ship design that allowed the Earth to launch a second seedship to Beta Caeli.

You start the game orbiting the planet called Gaea. On the planet's surface, the beginnings of your first colony, New Terra, have been put in place. Now it's up to you. You start with the minimal facilities on board the Calypso and several shuttles. The first thing you're going to need to do is turn New Terra into a self-sufficient place to live. From there, you can spread out across the planet, and then across the galaxy.

All of your colonies are supported by three things, Ore, Energy, and Life Support. These are produced by different facilities that you can build, each supplying one of these needed resources. In the proper combination, your colonies can be self-sufficient in a very short time. If you

end up with too much of one resource being produced by a colony, don't worry. Advances in technology will bring your facilities in line later in the game.

While your colony is being built, and it does take some time to build the facilities that will keep your colony growing, you can explore the planet you are on. Occasionally, your crew on board the Calypso will discover anomalies on the planet's surface. Check your Personal Data Assistant (PDA) and see where you need to go to examine each new find. Usually, each new find will lead you to a new place you need to explore, and, more than likely, that place will be on another planet. Other things you will discover are scientific resources and new technology left behind by the previous ship. Your scientists can expand on this technology, improving your planet-side facilities or upgrading your ships in space.

The race to colonize the Beta Caeli system becomes more apparent when you discover the Earth has been destroyed by the Alpha Centaurians. You are now the last, best hope for the human race. If you fail, humans as a race, will cease to exist. The threat of the Alpha Centaurians

hangs over you throughout the game. You know they're out there, and you suspect they are coming for you. You just don't know when.

Alien Legacy is enjoyable on all levels of play. For the people who like colonization and exploration types of games, there are several inhabitable planets, moons, and asteroids for you to search through. Trying to keep the colonies operating at peak efficiency and keep them self-sufficient can be a job in and of itself. Add to that the occasional outbreak of violence and you have a game that appeals to almost everyone.

A word of warning, however. **Alien Legacy** takes quite a while to play. The longest uninterrupted session I have had so far was seven hours and I still hadn't managed to explore everything or invent everything or ... well, you get the idea. But if you're looking for a game you can play for a while and not get bored with, check out **Alien Legacy**. Remember you're not the first human to battle the ancient alien legacy... but if you lose, you'll be the last. □

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A woman with long blonde hair is shown from the chest up, looking upwards with her mouth slightly open. A large, glowing, translucent hand reaches down from the top left corner of the frame, its fingers spread. The background is a dark, starry sky with a bright light source behind the word 'IMMORTAL'.

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Bits n' Pieces

Rumors, New Products, Etc.

By Mark Arsenault



Welcome back! I trust everyone survived the convention season relatively unharmed. There were some pretty strange goings on at this year's **GenCon**, although I'm assured by veteran attendees that it was all par for the course. I'd like to extend a special thanks to those who made me feel welcome, including Bruce Harlick and the rest of the Hero gang; Ken Cliffe over at White Wolf (is Mark done with his meetings so he can sign my book now?); Jolly, John and Dave at **SHADIS** (it's nice to know who you work for); Steve and Spike; and to all of the other kind folks too numerous to mention. You made a chaotic adventure memorable! I hope to see you all next year.

Whisper in My Ear

Pariah Press is now open for business! *Pariah's* central product line, **The Whispering Vault**, was released in a 'convention only' format last year. At this year's Gen Con, **Vault** was released in a new, complete retail format.

Pariah Press is owned by veteran game designer Mike Nystul. You can learn more about *Pariah Press* and **The Whispering Vault** by writing to 5744 Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634.

The Top Story

At 10 a.m. Tuesday morning, August 23rd, a special tactical team from the FBI gained swift and overwhelming entry into the corporate offices of *Tri Tac Games* in Pontiac, Michigan, to the great surprise of the entire staff (who were still sipping coffee). No joke. *Tri Tac* Owner Richard Tucholka related the story, saying that he was Mirandized

as the agents neatly and politely searched for "phony FBI identification badges" and "illicit government operation manuals." No such materials were found, although the agents confiscated day-glo orange and pink-colored "**Bureau 13/FBI**" badges, along with versions of a Dept. of Justice badge produced by *Databank Press*. We understand that the Federal Prosecutor will not be pressing charges. "In preparation for potential future government visits," a *Tri Tac* rep stated, "Mr. Tucholka has informed his lawyer, alerted the media, and set an extra pot of coffee to brew for the agents if they return."

Declaration of Independence!

With the unprecedented success of **SHADIS** over the last year, the industry has been abuzz about the publishers of **SHADIS** jumping into developing game products and dragging the magazine with them into the world of unadulterated house organs.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," according to **SHADIS's** editor, Jolly R. Blackburn. "**SHADIS** shall remain independent and neutral. I've made it a point to state our policies and plans in my editorials so that our readers know exactly where we plan to take **SHADIS**."

To show their commitment, the **SHADIS** staff has decided to publish its policy as a declaration of independence which will become a permanent fixture on the contents page.

"By putting it in writing, in public view," said Jolly, "we can expect our readers and advertisers to keep us honest."

Help Wanted

The **Adventurers Club**, *Hero Games'* magazine, is looking for submissions. "Lots of submissions," says Bruce Harlick. "We just jumped to 64 pages with issue #25 (out in December) and we're going to bi-monthly with issue #26 (out in February), so we're going to need a lot more stuff to publish." For more information, Hero-philes should write to AC, PO Box 720, Belmont CA 94002-0720, or e-mail Bruce directly at BruceHH@aol.com. Make sure to tell him that "Donut" sent you!

The *Alderc Group* (publishers of this very magazine) are looking for artists with an interest in the Old West and the Civil War eras — artists with an eye for historical accuracy and detail being preferred. For more information, contact the editor of **SHADIS**.

New Products from Goldtree Enterprises

Goldtree Enterprises recently announced several new products.

Adventure Works - RPG Mapping and Management (\$39.95) Experience the world building power of *Adventure Works*. Map an entire city, world, or universe and locate any of the Goldtree Cities below on the maps that YOU design. Create your own databases, customize generation tables, or build your own city using this ultimate role playing tool. It will amaze you with its power and flexibility. Supports ALL Role Playing Systems.

Hudson City - The Urban Abyss (\$39.95). From the Goldtree Development team and the creators of the Award Winning **HERO SYSTEM**, The first and best universal role playing system ever designed, comes the Modern Metropolis of

Hudson City. The dangerous and evil playground of the modern vigilante super heroes who walk the line between justice and vengeance. Be a Dark Champion and experience the gritty, intense adventures. Driven by the Goldtree Engine.

Digital Data

The six year pairing of *TSR, Inc.* and *SSI* is coming to an end. The two companies are going their separate ways, with *TSR* planning its own software development division to continue the **AD&D** line of computer games. The last products to come from the licensing arrangement will be **The Genie's Curse** and **Dark Sun II: Wake of the Ravager** (both available now), and **Menzoberranzan** (tentative title), which should be out by Christmas.

HeroMaker for Macintosh is under development, although there is no release date as of yet. Ditto for the **Champions** computer game for the PC. (I told you I'd keep you informed...)

Bill Smith, the **Star Wars RPG** line editor for *West End Games*, is now available online. You can reach him at WEGBill@aol.com.

In related news, *Wizards of the Coast's* new rep on *America Online* is Shawn F. Carnes. After pretty poor support by the prior rep, Paul Peterson (due to a very hectic schedule), Shawn got off to a rousing start, answering literally dozens of piled up questions.

There's a new multi-user online game available on *Novalink*. It's called **Cyber Corps**, and boasts a full 256 color VGA graphics as well as digitized stereo sound effects. The game involves up to 10 players and can be played in either full graphics or ANSI mode. **Cyber**

Corps is available by connecting to *Novalink*, or by telnetting into *Novalink* via the Internet. The front end software (CYBER.ZIP; complete with dial-up capability) can be downloaded direct from *Novalink* by typing /GO CYBER, or by FTP to ftp.novalink.com in the /pub/cyber directory. Got that? Me neither.

New from *Sierra On-Line, Inc.* is **Lode Runner: The Legend Returns!** This remake of Doug Smith's original *Lode Runner* (released over ten years ago) promises to be addicting, and includes ten different background screens for each group of levels. **LR:TLR** retails for \$49.95. For more information, contact *Sierra On-Line* at (800) 757-7707.

On the Horizon

The **World Builder** recently announced the upcoming release of their first roleplaying game, **Lords of Fantasy**. LOF is designed by Michael Halse and is scheduled for a May '95 release. **TWB** announced that they will be offering a full money-back guarantee on the product. If not 100% satisfied, just return the game within 30 days of purchase for a full refund. Bravo, Ty!

According to *R. Talsorian's* AOL rep, some upcoming products that **Castle Falkenstein** fans can look forward to include **Come II Faut** (referee's book), **Steam Age** (gadgets and the like) and **Magical Orders**, "and many more..." You can also expect **Castle Falkenstein** novels to hit bookstore shelves before too long.

The first campaign book for **Fantasy Hero** should be released next spring. The project has a working title of **Chaos World** (to be renamed), and will be followed by several more in the course of the year.

Wizards of the Coast is reportedly considering a release of white-bordered cards from the **M:TG** expansion sets, packaged as "1994 Expansion Sampler" packs. "If we pursue this," said *WotC* rep Shawn Carnes, "it would start to see the light of day in mid-1995." Shawn says feedback on this idea is welcome from Magic players and fans. Seems I just can't get through a single section of this column without mentioning those cards.

Chameleon Eclectic Entertainment reports that a **Vehicle**

Sourcebook for their popular **Milennium's End RPG** is in the works. It will include cars, small boats, off-road vehicles and mass transit vehicles (sounds like a well-rounded sourcebook).

Also in the works from *Chameleon Eclectic* is an interactive movie deal. We'll let you know more as we hear it.

Chaosium will be increasing their support for their **Pendragon RPG** with several new sourcebooks in the months ahead, according to Sam Shirley. Watch for **Beyond the Wall**, **Land of Giants**, and **Cornwall**. No release date set.

Also coming from *Chaosium*, for their new **Nephilim RPG**, will be the **Gamemaster's Veil** (which includes a GM's screen, sheets and forms, and a 16 page adventure), **Chronicle of Awakenings**, **Mystery of the Serpent Mounds** (an adventure book), **Secret Societies**, **Major Arcanum**, and **Templars**. "We are working on other titles as well," said Sam Shirley, "but don't want to mention them yet, as they are still in flux and may change."

What about *Cthulhu*, you ask? Watch for the **Miskatonic University** sourcebook, and **Strange Aeons**, a multi-era adventure book ranging from the Spanish Inquisition to a moonbase adventure in the year 2015!

Flying Buffalo Inc. is working on a revised edition of **Monsters! Monsters!**, essentially **Tunnels and Trolls** but where the PCs are the monsters rather than the "heroes." Look for it to be released around Christmas, according to FBI rep, Rick Loomis. Following the release of **MIMI**, the *Flying Buffalo* staff will be doing some work on the **Tunnels and Trolls** game itself. Also, watch for **Citybook 7** sometime next spring.

"**Critter-Tek**, the long-awaited (and much ballyhooed) parody of **Battletech** is nearing completion," says Paul Arden Lidberg, the game's designer and owner of *Crunchy Frog Enterprises*. "It shall see the light of day in mid-November. And the world shall quake with fear!" For more info, contact *Crunchy Frog Ent.* (FrogGod@aol.com).

In January look for **GURPS Voodoo** and a reprint of **GURPS Psionics**. Also in early '95 *SJ Games* will release **GURPS Com-**

pendium, *In Nomine* and a few other surprises.

May I See Your License?

Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and *R. Talsorian Games* announced a license agreement to produce **Netrunner**, a new **Deckmaster** card game based on *R. Talsorian's* **Cyberpunk** game. No release date. For additional info contact *Wizards of the Coast*.

Wizards of the Coast has also signed an agreement with *FASA Corporation* to produce a **Battletech** card game, based on (you guessed it) **Battletech**.

Gold Rush Games (headed by yours truly) has also acquired a license from *R. Talsorian Games* to produce a **Cyberpunk** music cassette, titled **Cyberpunk: Night City Trax**. It consists of 10 instrumental scores designed to enhance your netrunning experience. **Night City Trax** is scheduled for release later this month, with a retail price of \$9.95. For more information contact *Gold Rush Games* at PO Box 2531, Elk Grove CA 95759, or via e-mail to TGCEditor@aol.com.

Cthulhupunk is currently in playtest, according to *SJ Games* rep Chris McCubbin, and is on schedule for a March release.

Mayfair Games is still working on its new **SimCity** collectible card game. "It will be out as soon as we can print it," said a *Mayfair* rep. Watch for it just after the first of the year. Look for two unique **SimCity** cards (one featuring the **SHADIS** office and staff!) in a future issue.

I've saved the best licensing news for last. It seems that *TSR, Inc.* has licensed an Internet FTP file server to allow folks to download (and upload) files dealing with **Dungeons and Dragons** on the Internet. Each file must include a five line disclaimer at the top of the file. By the way, the FTP is at ftp.mpgn.com and there are no mirrors available, for those of you who know what that means. Please direct questions to TSRIInc@aol.com.

The Rumor Mill

"Contrary to popular rumor," according to *SJ Games* rep Chris McCubbin, "there are no **Jyhad** cards which parody any *Steve Jack-*

son Games employees in any way." Drat. I might as well cancel my pre-orders. I heard that the Von McCubbin card was a killer!

From the net... **Bladerunner** fans may be interested in hearing that *Bantam Books* has reportedly signed author K. W. Jeter to write a sequel to *Bladerunner*. The novel on which the movie was based was actually titled **Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?**, by Phillip Dick, said to be a close friend of Jeter's.

Rumor has it that *Goldtree Enterprises* is working on an add-on disk for their popular **Kingspoint** software. The disk will detail a city portrayed in a popular role-playing game. Additional information in unavailable at this time. Sounds interesting, however. Also look for a mapping utility from *Goldtree* in the future, as well as other utilities that allow city creation and generation.

Neat Stuff

Now available from *Chessex* are the **In Nomine** and **Illuminati Dragonskins**. The book covers feature art from the *Steve Jackson Games* products, and retail for \$5.

One of the great things I discovered at this year's **PacificCon** was the existence of *Dead Earth Productions*. Primarily a company which organizes LARP events, they also sell a few products, such as the hilarious "Hamstur the Unseeable" t-shirts. These shirts feature an illo of Hamstur himself on the back (drawn by comic artist Dan Hunter), and the Kult of Hamstur logo on the front. This limited edition t-shirt retails for \$20. Also available from *Dead Earth* are the **Kult of Hamstur Membership Kit**, complete with t-shirt, bumper sticker, button and a rare signed and numbered "Hamstur the Unseeable" t-shirt. These are too cool to pass up, especially for *Cthulhu* fans! Contact *Dead Earth Productions* at: PO Box 909, Newark CA 94560; (510) 429-1306 or email to DeadUrth@aol.com.

Product Delays

In Nomine (*SJ Games'* upcoming RPG release) has been temporarily put on hold so that the company can finish and release

their new card game, **Illuminati: New World Order**. According to Steve Jackson, *In Nomine's* release has been pushed back to December, possibly January. *INWO* is currently scheduled for a December release.

Don't expect to see the **Stonehenge Tribunal** sourcebook for *Ars Magica* any time soon. It has been put on the back burner. Since the sale of *Ars Magica* by *White Wolf* to *Wizards of the Coast*, it has taken a back seat to other *Ars Magica* projects.

Columbia Games has delayed the release of **EuroFront** so that they can finish work on their new card game, **Dixie**, set in the Civil War period. Look for **EuroFront** to be released around January.

Nightshift Games has delayed the release of its upcoming game, **Vampire Hunter\$**. The primary reason is to allow additional needed time and resources to release **CritterTek** by Crunchy Frog Enterprises, *Nightshift Games's* sillier side. In addition, **Lace and Steel** has been pushed back until early next year.

Product Cancellations

Due to an error during pre-production, the wrong ad for *Gold Rush Games* was printed last issue. It was an advertisement for **Hero League**, a superhero fanzine. Unfortunately, both **Hero League** and **Unearthly Knowledge** were cancelled prior to the release of the first issues. *Gold Rush Games* has entered into negotiations with several different companies for licenses, necessitating that we cancel the new zines in order to free up time and resources for potential future projects. The **Gamer's Connection** is still available, however, at the listed subscription price. I apologize for the mix up.

Don't expect **GURPS Talislanta** any time soon. Since the selling of **Talislanta** by *Wizards of the Coast* to *Daedalus Games*, the deal has been scrapped.

Due to the fallout between *Steve Jackson Games* and *White Wolf Game Studio*, it is unlikely we will see any more **GURPS** translations of storyteller products after the release of **GURPS Mage**.

The Hollywood Scene

Peter Cushing passed away this summer from cancer. The 81 year old actor starred in numerous movie and television roles, including *Dracula*, *Baron Frankenstein* and *Grand Moff Tarkin* (in *Star Wars*). He is one of the great legends of motion pictures, in my opinion. Rest in peace, Mr. Cushing.

Aaron Spelling and *White Wolf Games* are reportedly discussing producing a television pilot. The show is said to be set in Los Angeles and based on *WW's* popular roleplaying game, **Vampire: The Masquerade**.

Speaking of vampires, Anne Rice was reportedly very pleased with the film adaption of her novel. She was even happy with Tom Cruise's portrayal as the vampire Lestat. Now that's a switch from earlier reports...

Game Designers Workshop and *Anders International* have signed an agreement, I hear, to produce a television series based on *GDW's* Victorian RPG, **Space: 1889**.

Anyone know what happened to the movie deal?

Fans of the special effects extravaganza movie **The Mask** will be happy to learn that negotiations are currently underway for a sequel.

Watch for **Die Hard 3** next year, with Samuel Jackson as the star's sidekick.

There's a rumor from the Hollywood grapevine that we will see the release of a fourth **Aliens** movie, to be directed by James Cameron.

Just a Reminder

If you would like your upcoming products, news, and items of general interest to gamers mentioned in **Bits & Pieces**, send them to me. And make sure to add me to your mailing list for press releases, announcements, and private party invitations. Send your bits & pieces to: **BITS & PIECES**, c/o Mark Arsenault, P.O. Box 2531, Elk Grove CA 95759. You can send your e-mail announcements to: TGCEditor@aol.com.

Take care, and I'll see you back here in sixty days!□



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NEW PERSPECTIVES

The World of Miniatures

By Ken Carpenter • B&W Photos by Don Witmer



What's been going on with board games and miniatures games the last couple of years, huh? Board games are supposed to have die-cut, cardboard counters, little decks of cards, and/or pieces that look like tophats, dogs, race cars and shoes. That isn't, however, what they've looked like lately!

The first huge board game of the new genre was **Battletech**, and the original box came with colored, stand-up, cardboard counters. Then they added miniatures and the invasion began. Since then we've seen **HeroQuest**, **Space Hulk**, **Centurion**, **Silent Death**, **Battle Masters**, **Siege of the Citadel**, **Legions of Steel**, and numerous others. All of them basically board games designed for miniatures use.

I think it's about time that somebody told them... "Keep up the good work!". Battletech was my introduction to minia-

tures games, though hardly my introduction to miniatures. Since then it has been my pleasure to drop thousands of dollars into figures for **Ogre** miniatures, **Warhammer 40K**, **Warhammer Fantasy**, **Legions of Steel**, and a myriad of other miniatures games.

What gets us so into these games? Speaking for myself, the answer to that question is the figures themselves. Whenever I see a great figure that is part of, or designed for, a certain game I just have to look into the game. If the game stinks, I may still pick up a few of the best figures just because they're so good, but I won't get drawn into it. If the game is good, then I get all goose bumpy and start playing. But it was the miniatures that interested me enough to look at the game in the first place.

This issue we take a look at some miniatures and board games, plus an assortment of miniatures. Next issue we'll do a **Warhammer Fantasy** scenario, so break out your armies! Also, by request, in issue #18 we will take a look at many of the acrylic paints and brushes, from low to high end, that are readily available to us - the hobby painters. Don't miss it, especially if you're a beginner or have limited your paint set to one brand - you may be surprised!

You can write in with your comments and suggestions - New Perspectives, P.O. Box 9, Murrieta, CA 92564.

Now, let's turn to this issue's reviews.

FLASHPOINT!

Virtual Fusion Publishing

By Dan Lavine ♦ Price: \$24.95

Presentation: 8 ♦ Playability: 7 ♦ Value: 6

FLASHPOINT! is a futuristic, table-top miniatures game with the beginnings of a rich background and some unique concepts. For a first product from a fledgling company, the presentation and illustrations are unexpectedly good. The layout is good and the rules are easy to find. There are even an index and reference sheets.

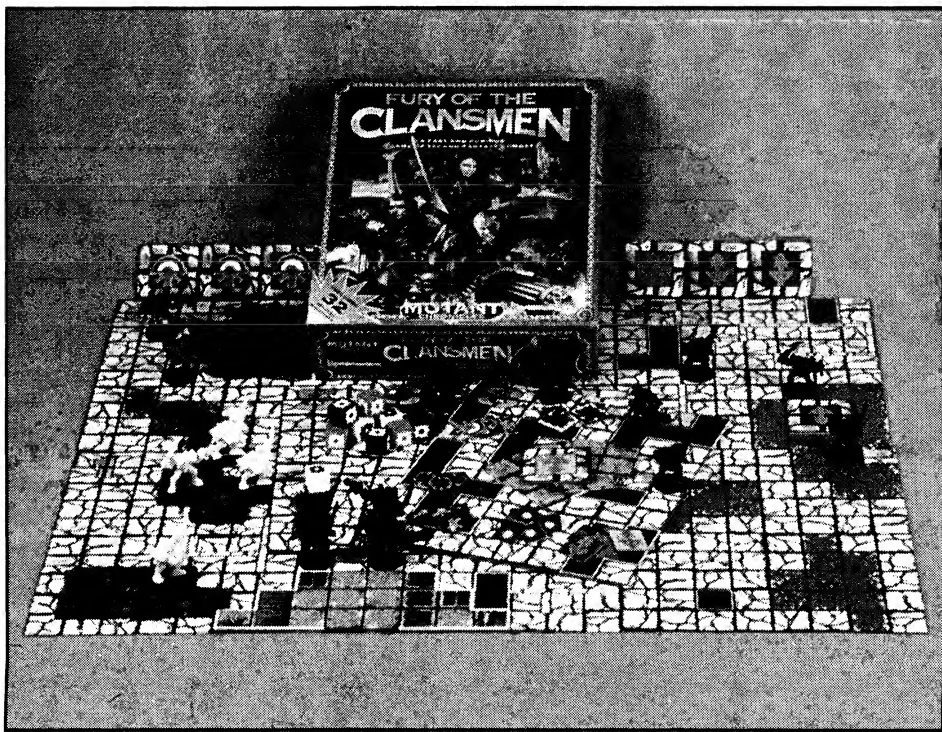
I enjoyed the background and the mechanics, which presents a slide bar 'to-hit' system based on positive and negative attack modifiers. Building units is done by selecting a unit type, a leader, their gear and accessories, then figuring the points. The point system seems balanced (always a plus) and the number of weapons, armor, and equipment types makes for a huge variety of units. There is quite a strategy to unit construction, so be sure and read all the accessories and armor types.

The close combat system, which is fast and furious, doesn't allow retreat from hand-to-hand once engaged. My contention was that a fast, well equipped close combat squad has an advantage if they can engage, since the enemy can't retreat. However, the rules are quick to point out that ranged conflict is the order of the day and the





Legions of Steel



Fury of the Clansmen

author doubts the ability of such a unit to survive long enough to reach hand to hand. Nevertheless, he intends to address it in a second printing next year.

Less complex than most games of this genre, the vehicle rules and some of the special effects for weapons are the most complex part of this system. An experienced player ought to be able to bring a new player up to speed in one game (about two hours). Making your own units can be complex, if you so choose, but more standard units are simple to create.

Designed for squad and platoon sized action, with 10-40 models on a side, the game allows you to use real infantry tactics and make a difference. In fact, a military friend of mine turned me on to the game for that very reason. The mechanics work smoothly, and there are few reasons to argue during play - always a plus with a table top game.

The rules are fun and the background material interesting. Overall, it's a great piece of work.

Legions of Steel

Published by Global Games

By Clark Browning, Marco Pecota,
Derrick Villeneuve ♦ Price: \$39.95

Presentation: 7 ♦ Playability: 9 ♦ Value: 10

The second printing of *Legions of Steel* shipped recently with a new, lower price. The old price was \$59.95, and the game was well worth it then; now it's too good to pass up. The game comes with 19 metal figures (sculpted by Tom Meier), dozens of counters, updated rules, and 48 floor templates. The second printing changes a few rules, like grenades, but the changes are a definite improvement.

The background has a legion of machine invaders gobbling up the galaxy. A coalition of sentient races, designated by League of Aliens, approaches the Earth because it is in the path of the machine expansion. Earth agrees to join the league of aliens and help fight the machine menace (massive abbreviation of the game's background).

Having fought a running battle with the machines, the league has figured out that the only way to hurt the machines is to attack them in their production and control complexes. Consequently, most scenarios take place deep in the machine complexes.

The scenarios each provide a map, which can be created with the floor tiles, the objectives, and any special rules that are required for the game. It then falls to

the players to work out the outcome of the situation.

Combat is worked out with a single die roll per shot, making combat very quick without sacrificing the fun. Differing weapons and types of fire make the combat system one of the most versatile and allows many variations in strategy.

There are a myriad of supporting products that add new rules, weapons, races, and floor templates, which add further depth to an already great game. And the figures! This is a prime example of the figures leading you to a great game. I highly recommend this game to both beginners and experienced miniatures gamers - with all the great support material and tremendous background, LOS has become my favorite board/miniatures game (and I'm really looking forward to the promised table-top game).

There is also a 'no-lead' version of the game, for people who aren't into metal figures, that comes with four-color, stand-up counters instead of figures. The no-lead version costs \$29.95.

Fury of the Clansmen

By Heartbreaker Hobbies & Games

Price: \$34.95

Presentation: 9 ♦ Playability: 6 ♦ Value: 7

Based in the increasingly popular Mutant Chronicles game setting, Fury of the Clansmen has a lot in common with Siege of the Citadel, which was designed by Heartbreaker's staff but published by Pressman Toys. Imperial Clansmen, some of the toughest warriors for humanity, shoot their way through the evil Legions of Darkness.

The game comes with 32 great plastic figures; 12 clansmen (in three stances) and 20 legion figures (15 Necromutants and 5 Centurians). The legion figures are the same as those used in Siege. There are also 8 full-color board tiles representing parts of the Venusian Jungle. The tiles include terrain, from jungle and broken walls to rubble heaps and boulders. Additional components include the colored dice and many die cut counters that help out during play.

The game is a blast! I had a lot of fun playing through a number of the scenarios, but there is one major flaw - the balance. The Clansmen have a definite advantage in the game. A bit of fiddling determined that

increasing the number of dice used by the legion player by one die should even things out. So Necromutants would roll 4 white dice instead of 3 and the Centurians would roll 4 red dice instead of 3. Without a fix such as this, the legion player can get work for a draw, but the clans player would have to really mess up to lose. With the fix, the playability goes up to 8!

The scenarios have great variety and the terrain can really change the strategy of each mission. The price is worth it just for the number of figures you get, if you are into Mutant Chronicles.

Talisman

By Games Workshop ♦ Price: \$54.95

Presentation: 10 ♦ Playability: 7 ♦ Value: 4

The re-release of GW's classic boardgame, the new Talisman comes with 12 characters (incredible plastic figures), dice, counters, and a new set of rules. The board is similar to the one we all remember, but there are some significant differences in the central region.

The rules have been simplified a little, taking out the few interpretational problems you might have encountered in the first

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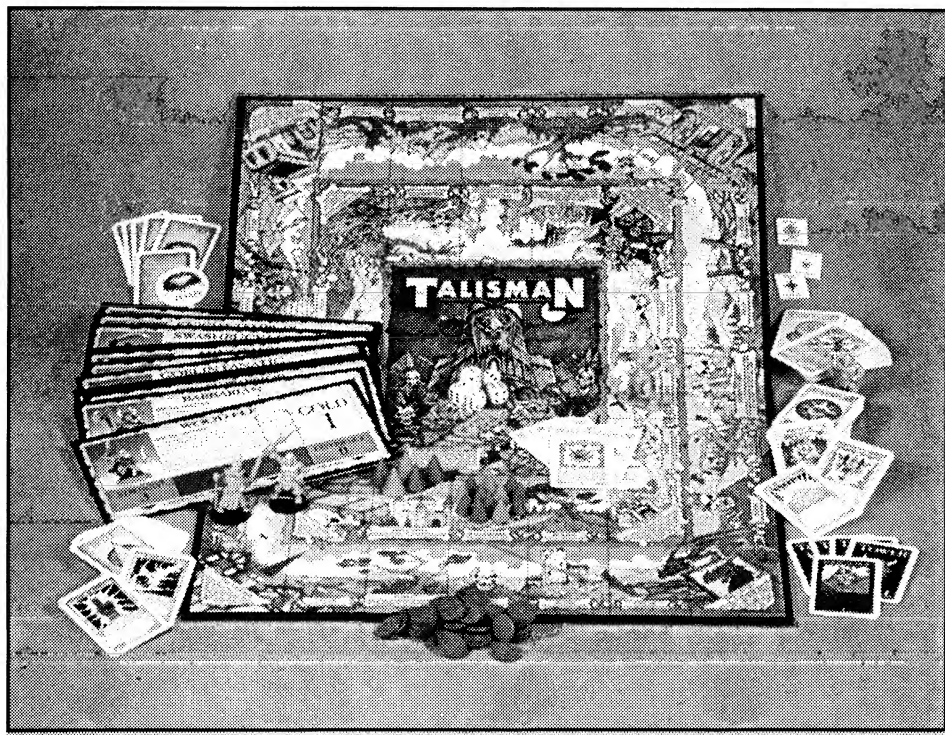
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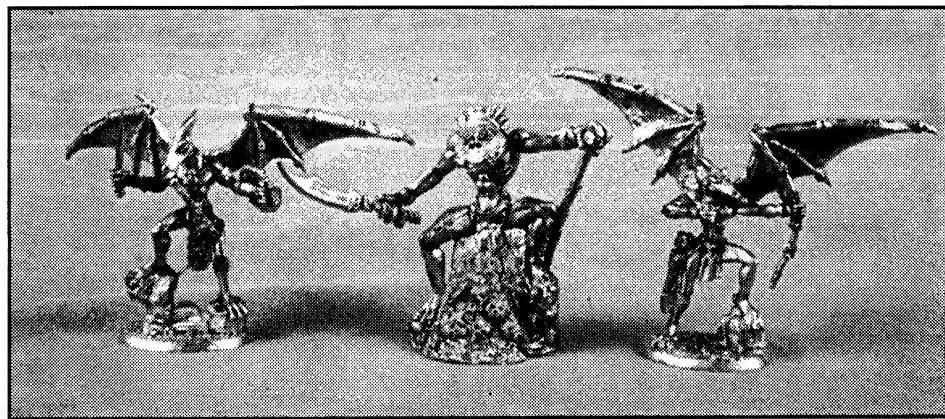
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Talisman



Evil Toad Minions

release. Also, the characters have been balanced more evenly than the older version, but maybe a bit too evenly. The pace of play is about the same, but everyone is so evenly matched that it seems longer before you start showing signs of improvement.

The appearance of the game wasn't sloppy last time, but it's very glitzy now, complete with cardboard character cards, rounded corner playing cards and, of course, the miniature figures.

Talisman is one of those games that will be around forever - a truly classic fantasy boardgame. You have to be willing to play for two to four hours, but what gamers are going to have a problem with that? There are plans for a number of expansion sets, the first of which has just been released (adding dungeons to the game), which will include new characters and miniatures, more cards, and more regions.

Evil Toad/Minions

Ral Partha's Encounters™ line

Sculpted by Jim Johnson

#02-503 ♦ 25mm ♦ \$9.95

Technical: 7 ♦ Artistic: 9 ♦ Value: 5

This set of three figures, in eleven pieces, includes a central toad figure on a throne-like dais and two pterodactyl warriors. Creative, fantastic figures like these are the reason many of us became involved with miniatures in the first place. The pieces all fit well together, requiring minimal fitting effort. Epoxy is always recommended when putting pieces together, but you won't need much here. There are minute parting lines along the sides of all three figures, but clean up is a breeze.

The 'evil toad' is an accomplishment of musculature and regal pose. The detail of skin is great, warts and all. The skulls at the base of the throne are a nice touch. His head and right hand with sword come separately. The pterodactyl warriors are dramatically posed, one an archer the other a swordsman with shield. Leathery wings and heads are separate pieces. The detail is great on these two warriors, from musculature and wings to turtle shell shield and animal hide quiver. These figures could find use in any number of fantasy or horror based game systems.

Sacrificial Altar w/Accessories

Grenadier's Fantasy Warriors™ line

Sculpted by Bob Naismith

#412 ♦ 25mm ♦ \$7.00

Technical: 8 ♦ Artistic: 7 ♦ Value: 6

All right, who let Bob go see all those Hellraiser movies? The detail of these sacrificial pieces is too well thought out - he'll be needing some professional help, and soon.

Virtually without parting lines, the only areas of flash are minor traces along the base of the goat's altar and a trace or two on the giant hand holding the bowl.

The detailed stonework holding up the altar table is good, including a ghoulish symbol at the head. The altar itself, complete with flow gullies and manacles, is embellished with two skulls. Also included are the tied up victim-to-be, the goat altar, and two candelabra.

This is perfect for diorama or role-playing uses. If your GM uses this too often in game-play, you might want to refer him to a good psychiatrist.

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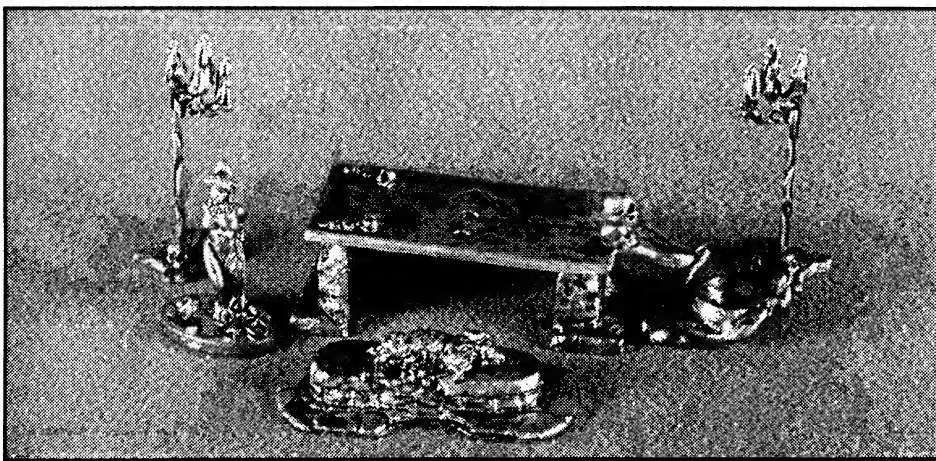


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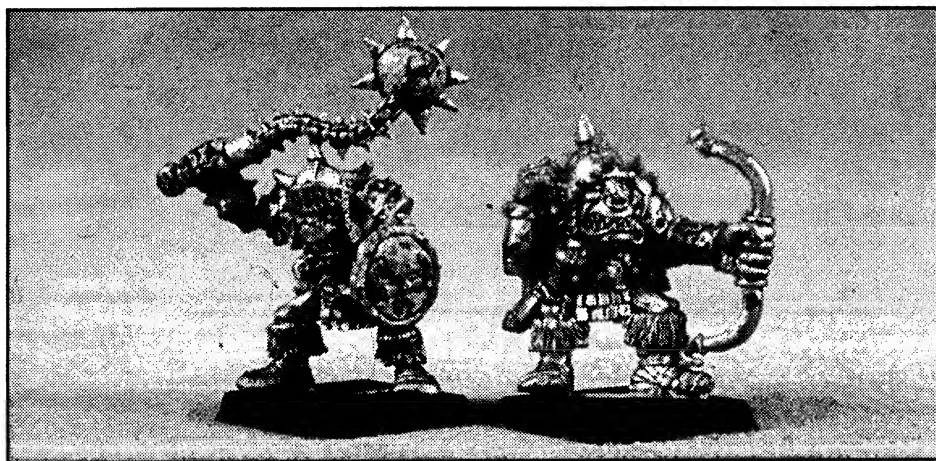
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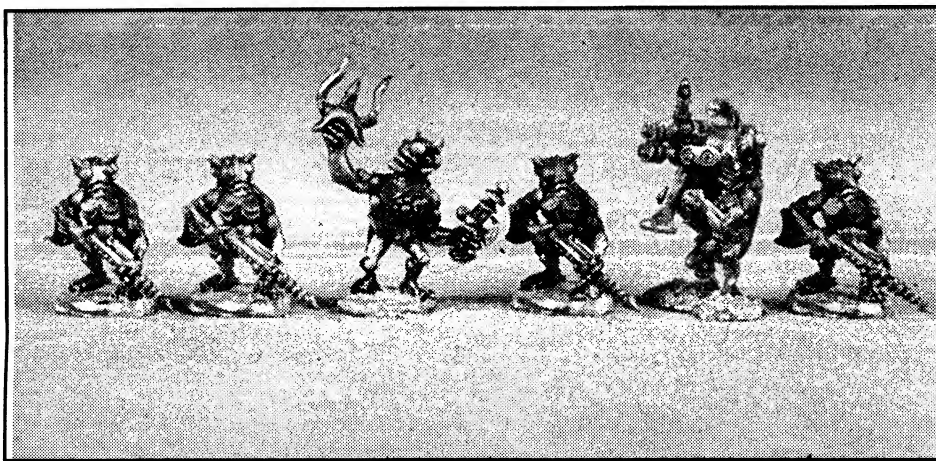
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Orc with Morningstar and Orc Archer Loading 882003/3005



Alien Squad #LS-17

Orc with Morningstar Orc Archer Loading

Heartbreaker's Kev Adams Fantasy™ line
Sculpted by Kev Adams

#2003/#2005 ♦ 28mm ♦ \$2.50 ea.

Technical: 8 ♦ Artistic: 8 ♦ Value: 6

Finely sculpted pieces by Kev Adams, these orcs are ready and willing to disable. It's hard to believe, after a decade of producing orcs and goblins at Games Workshop, but Kev has joined forces with Heartbreaker. It's my understanding that work on the Mutant Chronicle line was one of the lures, but that's hear-say.

The archer has only minor mold lines down the left side and along the bow; preparation should be a breeze. The orc with morningstar has negligible paring lines. Painting will prove challenging due to the level of detail, but they're well worth the work.

The archer's equipment includes scaled armor with layered shoulder protection, short bow, quarrel of arrows, belt pouch, dagger, spiked helm and nose ring. Extra details like the bracers and belts add that little extra touch. Facial detail is great, showing the orc's pleasure that the enemy finally has come within range.

With flying morningstar, the other nasty orc is ready for battle. His scaled armor and emblazoned shield are well sculpted, as are the heads hanging from the rear of his belt. His feet are wrapped in leather and cloth while his belt buckle and dagger pommel bear skulls.

Alien Squad (Vord)

Lance & Laser's basic line
Sculpted by Neville Stocken

#LS-17 ♦ 25mm ♦ \$6.95

Technical: 7 ♦ Artistic: 5 ♦ Value: 8

This six figure blister gives you four regular Vord troopers (the same figure), a heavy weapons trooper, and a leader. I know I've seen something like these before, or at least their heads. They remind me of a creature from the 'bar scene' in Star Wars.

While the casting is pretty good, there are minor mold lines along the sides of each model. No other casting problems mar the figures, and the lines clean up easily, so the overall technical mark is above average.

Artistically, these figures are a matter of taste. The strangeness might throw a lot of gamers off, just as it might attract a lot of

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gamers. While the regular trooper weapons look a little clunky and rudimentary, the Vord themselves look great. The detailed build of the Vord and the strange head and feet are right out of 1950's Sci-Fi. The leader's right handed knife-thing is pretty weird, but the pistol in his left hand looks good. The heavy weapon, which comes in two pieces, is great and fits the trooper very well.



Fire Dragon Phoenix Lord

Games Workshop's Warhammer 40K™

Sculpted by Jes Goodwin

#9071 ♦ 28mm ♦ \$7.99

Technical: 6 ♦ Artistic: 8 ♦ Value: 4

Representing Fuegan, a special character for the Codex Eldar army list, this figure is everything a 40K player could want in an exarch. The figure comes in two pieces - Fuegan and his power axe.

Parting lines and flash are minimal on this figure, but the front and back of the helmet were a bit rough, requiring some short stroke filing to smooth out. Minor parting lines along the weapon and sides of the helmet clean up easily.

From impressive helmet and huge weapon to sharply angled armor and detailed pack, this is an incredible figure. It has been detailed almost to the point of disbelief.

The armor has been made to look like scales, as has his breachclout, and dragon heads embellish both the belt across his chest and the one at his waist.

He has a dramatic pose and so many extra little details and refinements - painting

this guy will prove to be both fun and challenging.

FMS-1213 Gadram

Rafm's Mekton™ line

Sculpted by Stephen Koo

#1021 ♦ 1/285 ♦ \$7.50

Technical: 5 ♦ Artistic: 7 ♦ Value: 4

Another fine example of Japanimation for Rafm's Mekton line, the Gadram is a four piece robot warrior of huge proportions.

There are quite a few parting lines, along the shoulders and down the sides, but they are minor and file away nicely. The two turrets mount on either shoulder, fitting pretty well, and the booster mounts to the middle of the back.

Sharp angles and proportions really set this figure off, creating a very animated appearance. The detail is quite good, from intake valves to jump jets. With so many surfaces and detail, painting will be an exceptional challenge - the best kind.

The Jester

Rafm's Fantastique Noir Vampyres™ line

Sculpted by Bob Murch

#3960 ♦ 25mm ♦ \$4.25

Technical: 6 ♦ Artistic: 8 ♦ Value: 7

This two piece set is another of Rafm's incredible Vampyres line. While some of the figures have been rather esoteric, they have all been interesting and well sculpted.

The casting of these two figures is very good. A slight sheeting formed between the tall mime's legs and there are very slight

lines along the clown's sides, but they all file away easily, leaving no trace.

While I don't pretend to know how these figures fit into the vampyre motif, I have to admit they are great figures. The whole line has run to the arty side, but I have really enjoyed the alternate styling of these figures.

The mime stands on a base which contains the Shakespearean masks of comedy and tragedy. He holds the mask of tragedy away from his joyful face. Dressed in ballet slippers and a body suit that ends at the calves, the mime will be interesting to paint. A jester's scepter comes with this figure.

The clown is quite a character as well. With full clown get-up, from mop-like wig to big shoes, he is the picture of entertainment, but don't tick this little guy off, he's got a knife! Painting the clown can be a real treat, using bright, clashing colors to give a carnival clown effect.

Ladies Pack #1

Soldiers & Swords' Castle Falkenstein™ line

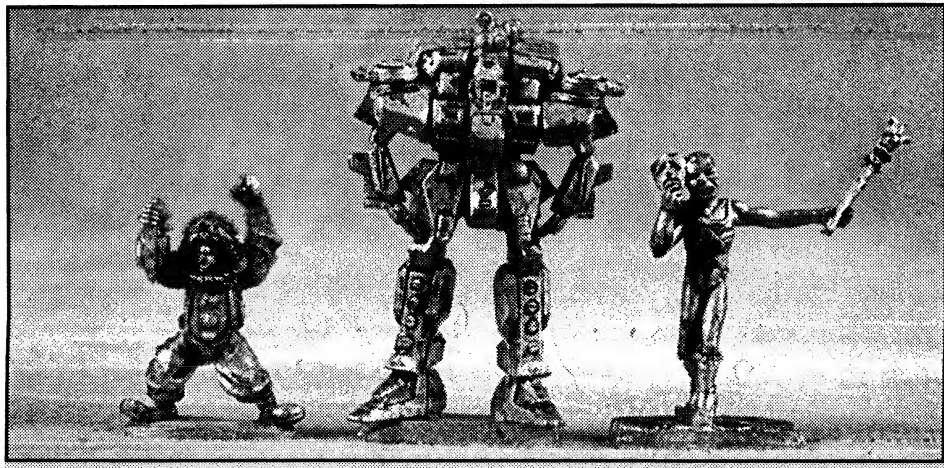
Sculpted by Bob Ridolfi

#155002 ♦ 25mm ♦ \$4.95

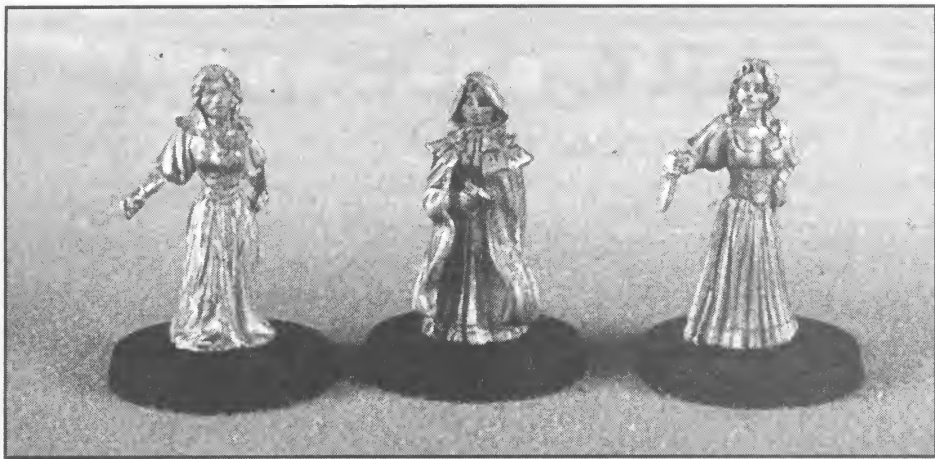
Technical: 8 ♦ Artistic: 7 ♦ Value: 8

Designed for use with R. Talsorian Games' Castle Falkenstein, this new line from Soldiers & Swords is already turning heads.

Parting lines are few and far between in this set of three figures. Finding them is difficult, but getting rid of the rare line you find will be a breeze. The only trace worth mentioning is a minor line that runs through the hair of the buxom, dagger wielding woman. It's minor, but will require careful work with a #11 blade to remove.



Gadram and Jester #1021/3960



Ladies Pack #1 (#155002)

Looking at that same figure, you have to admire the detail and workmanship. Her face is wonderful, though not entirely symmetrical. The proportions are excellent, if just a touch exaggerated. Her hair and clothing are well done as well.

The next woman, in hooded cloak, is wide of face, but still very well done. The cloak has a few, layered ruffles and a bow at the neck. Her dress is trimmed at the hem

and the pistol in her right hand is well detailed for the scale.

The last figure may be the best overall. Her face is attractive but carries a hint of vampire about the mouth. Her hair is well done but her clothing is exceptional, with layered shoulder panels, stiff collar, bloused sleeves and angled belt. Her proportions are still a bit exaggerated, but definitely not to the point of disbelief or disgust. □

Someday they'll make a miniature out of me and then I'll blow this lousy rag for the big times.



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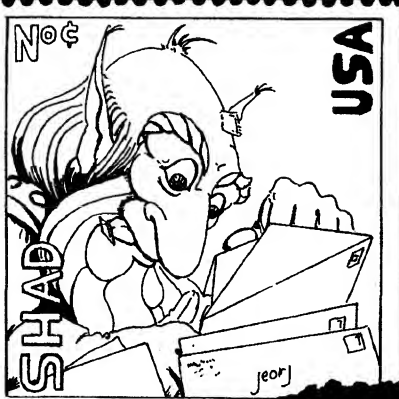
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Special Play-By-Mail Section

Edited by Patrick M. Rodgers

Much has been made of a recent letter by TSR that has been circulating in the online community. TSR kindly rushed a copy of the letter to us for commentary in this issue. The letter is primarily aimed at individuals on the Internet, but may have ramifications for PBM as well. First, the Internet angle: TSR will no longer allow any distribution of materials over the Internet that violate TSR copyright.

TSR has licensed an "official" Internet site to **MPGNet**. Anyone may upload materials to this site, as long as a TSR-created disclaimer is included. Authors lose no rights to their works in doing so. Material can be retrieved from the site via FTP. In addition, TSR has created an official area on **America Online** for this purpose, and plans to expand both Internet and Commercial Service locations.

The ramifications for PBM are obvious. Many PBM games include terms such as "hit points," and some mention creatures or races that may have been created by TSR. Such terms may have to be modified if TSR chooses to pursue this area. A far greater grey area is the amateur PBM game. Many such games use the AD&D system and mechanics. For-profit games will almost certainly be targeted, but the status of non-profit games, even games between friends conducted postally, is uncertain. TSR may feel that if they fail to pursue even non-profit infringement of their copyright, their rights will be weakened. Perhaps TSR will choose to ignore such "violations."

Naturally, small games conducted between friends run practically no risk of being noticed. However, it is not uncommon to occasionally recruit an unfamiliar player or two to fill a slot, especially on-line, and it is

this practice which may place individuals at risk of being spotted. It seems unlikely that "first offenders" have anything more to fear than a polite reprimand; what will happen to "repeat offenders" is unknown.

Further commentary on this issue would be nothing more than personal speculation. If you feel that you may be affected in some way by this policy, or have questions regarding it, you are advised to contact TSR and request information. Try to be polite and to-the-point, as they are likely handling inquiries from many concerned parties. Doubtless we will bring you more on this matter in future issues.

"We love to be Conned!" This seemed to be the opinion of the **SHADIS** staffers who showed up at **ShoreCon** and **AndCon** this year. **ShoreCon** was light on PBM, with only one company in attendance.

AndCon, on the other hand, had plenty of PBM. Most of the majors were there this year, with GSI finally putting in an appearance. Alas, rules for their new **MEPBM** scenario weren't yet ready at press time. Numerous smaller companies were also present, offering an excellent mix of products. Kudos to Andon Unlimited for another fantastic convention.

Speaking of **AndCon**, Rich Van Ollefen of **Flying Dutchman Games** was present, in part to promote a convention of his own. Titled simply **PBMCon**, the convention is scheduled for June 2-4 in Arlington Heights, IL, near Chicago. As per the name, the con's focus is exclusively on PBM. Van Ollefen points out that many gamers become "distracted" by other features at cons, and feels that PBM often takes a back seat.

For a \$25.00 registration fee, players at **PBMCon** may play in two

games all weekend, with additional games available at \$5-10 each. A number of impressive companies are already on board. For more information, contact **PBMCon**, PO Box 957434, Hoffman Estates IL 60195.

Following our review of **SpyKor** in Issue 15, we received Email from **Sudden Asylum**. They quite correctly pointed out that the game we reviewed was still in playtest, which likely accounts for the high dropout rate we commented on. **SpyKor** is now fully commercial, and reviewers who win their games will likely be doing so at the expense of seven other players.

In the last issue of **SHADIS**, a review of the **Olympia PBEM** was incorrectly attributed to **Post Marque** editor, Patrick Rodgers. The review was, in fact, written by **Greg Lindahl**. We sincerely regret the error and apologize to Mr. Lindahl.

One final note - **SHADIS** is still looking for qualified reviewers to cover various PBM games. Send a sample of your writing and gaming experience c/o Shadis Magazine.

Ship Ahoy New Games on the Horizon

Lucky Llama games has announced a special variant game of **You Rule!** especially for beginners. This is a solo game (i.e. one player per game) with the computer as an opponent. Rules, setup, and five turns are \$10.00, additional turns are \$1.50. When the game is over, or the player feels he has learned enough, he is given free setup in a regular game.

From the icy shores of Canada comes **ChoZen FroZen Games** and their debut release, **Magika**. This game follows the journey of 12

novice magicians as they compete to determine who will be elevated to Adept status. In a truly fascinating twist, a 13th contestant is able to slip into the game via a loophole in the rules - the Ebon Mage. The Ebon Mage position is offered (once) to a player when he wins a game, and his goal is to prevent any of the 12 novices from winning!

The rulebook is 21 half-pages in length and well-laid out, covering most aspects of the game in suitable detail. Several reference tables, but no index, are included. Results appear to be printed on an inkjet printer, and an impressive color map accompanies each turn. Each action's results are reported with a brief, narrative-style paragraph.

With only 5 Action Phases per turn, it seems that turns may not be too action-intense, which makes **Magika** an excellent "beer and pretzels" game. **Magika** is also marketed as a beginner's game, and first impression leads one to believe that it may fit the bill.

A computer assist program (**CAMP**) is available for the IBM, and reduced fees are available for those taking advantage of this product (**CAMP** was not available for review at press time). Setup, rulebook, and four turns are \$15.00US (\$20 CAN), and turns are \$3.50US (\$5.00CAN) thereafter.

Rules alone are available for \$3US (\$4CAN) which can be applied towards setup. Make cheques payable to Chris Knapp. Discounts apply for Email/BBS turns. For more information, contact **ChoZen FroZen games**, 850 Shawn Drive, Kingston NS, Canada B0P 1R0, or via Internet at C.Knapp@geis.com.

Island Take Over

PBM Review

Reviewed by Robert Bost

Editor's note: SHADIS's review policy is that we cannot accept reviews written by game company owners or employees. While Bob Bost is the operator of Atomic Games, his review position in this game, and one other, were well underway before he took his position.

Thus, with the permission of Island Takeover's GM, we present this review.

Your merchants are clamoring to have you increase the economic potential of the region. The military is insisting that more strongholds are needed to protect what you have. And you want more armies to spread your banner and conquer your enemies.

Which do you choose? **Island Takeover** is an easy to understand of military conquest. While the rules are short and to the point (9 pages

long), the game has many variations of play that will influence your outcome.

The Game

Set on a map 12 squares by 12 squares, the game will have at least 70 land squares and 50 water squares. These are the only two types of terrain there are to consider. Armies can move through up to three land squares per turn. The interesting, and very surprising move is on water, where armies can move an unlimited distance as long as the armies started the turn adjacent to water. The army boards ships (not shown in the game) and can travel as far as it can trace adjacent water squares.

Since water circles the map border, you can conceivably move from one corner to the opposite corner in one turn!

Each turn you select the Build orders for each square you control.

Each square will have at least 1 Resource Point (RP) for you to use in building things. Territories that you

have captured will not be available to build on the following turn as you are busy putting down the rabble and making them see the light. Again, your options for what to build are limited.

Cities: They cost 1 RP each and you can only build one per turn. For every 2 cities in a square, the production of that square is increased by 1 with a maximum of 10 cities per square.

Strongholds: These also cost 1 RP to build and can only be built a maximum of 1 per turn as well. These are defensive structures with a value of 5 armies.

Armies: These are what you need to conquer those bothersome players. Each RP will produce 4 armies and there is no limit to the amount of RPs each square can use for these other than the number of RPs available.

Spies & Saboteurs: To employ a saboteur or to spy on a player will cost 1 RP. To spy on territories, 3 spies can be sent for each RP. A saboteur will try to destroy a city, stronghold or 4 armies in the select-

ed square. A spy sent to investigate an enemy player will reveal information on the number of squares they control, the number of cities and the number of armies. These numbers are not reliable but I have been unable to determine the possible degree of inaccuracy. Spies sent to a territory will reveal what is inside (cities, strongholds & armies) and who controls it.

You will start the game owning only 2 squares which will be near each other but not necessarily adjacent. Each square holds 10 armies and nothing else.

Neutral squares each start with 6 armies and these territories WILL build armies, cities & strongholds. Neutral territories can also attack in random directions, including into player territories, though I have not noticed any neutrals using waterborne invasions.

Each game will last between 20-25 turns ending on a random turn within this period. The player with the most cities at this time will be the victor. Alliance victories are possible as long as all parties are allied to



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Setup fee is \$10.00 and includes two ten action turns and the rulebook. Turn cost is \$2.50. Extra actions are 25 cents each. Rulebook, when purchased separately, is \$5.00.

each other. Of course, the game can end sooner if a player or alliance has eliminated everyone else and rules the world.

Tips

Conquest will be easier if you use a single large force rather than two or more smaller forces. Since the force can move 3 squares, you can combine the armies from your two territories quickly by attacking toward each other and then continuing on in a combined assault.

You should start building cities as soon as possible and each territory should build the maximum one city per turn. Remember that not only do extra cities get you more to build with later, this is what determines the winner in the game!

My own experience shows that armies are far preferable to strongholds. Combat is based on the number of armies in that square so a large army can overcome strongholds with little loss. If you build armies, you can move those in the inner territories to the border and concentrate your defenses there.

The disadvantage is that if you do this, you may leave yourself open to a small roving army capturing lots of territories if they break through. My advice is 1-2 strongholds per square and then build armies.

Try to place a reserve army along the border waterway. Based here, it can move to nearly any section of the map quickly to counter enemy threats.

If you are allied to another player, *make sure you know where he is!!!* Why do I say this? If you are allied to another player and your mega-army ends the turn in that players square, your army now becomes his army! And while you may be allied to him, he may not be allied to you so those armies could return quickly as conquerors.

Review

The only thing I did not like is a message each turn from *The Powers That Be* that tell who has the most cities and/or armies, and how many they have. While this may be nice if you are back in the pack, if you are the front runner, you really don't want the GM placing a neon sign above your territories blinking Target.

A better option would be to list the most number of cities and armies, but not which player has them. This would give you an idea where you are without telling on the leaders.

Island Takeover is a great game for beginners and an excellent filler game for the long-time gamer. With FREE rules, and turn costs being only \$2 for EMail or \$3 for US Mail, you can't beat the value for your money.

For more information, contact Eclipse Consulting, PO Box 969, Yonkers NY 10703-0969, or post to 71441,3144 on the CompuServe PBMGAMES forum.

CTF 2187

A PBM Review

Reviewed by Shannon Muir

CTF 2187 is a Battle Bot strategy game offered by *Advanced Gaming Enterprises (AGE)* of Sacramento, California. Combat takes place in an Arena mapped out as a square grid (29x29 or 30x25 depending on

the type of contest). Games usually run between 7 and 10 turns, and players have no idea when a given game will end. Terrain types include Buildings, Hills, Ridges, Woods, Lakes, Craters and Gullies — the mix of which is randomly decided from game to game. Each team also has an armed Command Post (CP) that can be attacked. Survival of the CP is important because its destruction adversely affects the targeting capabilities of all Bots allied to it.

Teams for these contests are often made up of people under an organized alliance, usually officially recognized by AGE (as are my own teams, *Sisters of Silicon* and *Blackdeath*). However, these groups sometimes cannot field a whole side on their own and must rely on outside help. In these cases, the GMs assign Independent Pilots (i.e. Pilots without a team affiliation) to fill the ranks — which is the way many first-time players start out.

Diplomacy is not a must in this game, but it is helpful. There's no way of knowing how much a given team communicates until the Arena gets underway. Teams seem to do

best when Pilots coordinate their moves. The lone hotshot may do well on his or her own, but if trouble arises, odds are he or she won't see help. Names and addresses for players on your team are provided with the initial turn for each Arena; however, you can request a Privacy Option that will restrict this information to other players. You can communicate with other players whom you do not know by writing a 3x5 card addressed to their Pilot and sending it to AGE, who will forward it.

Step 1: Creating a Pilot

Before you can get into an Arena, you must have a Pilot. A Pilot can be put into a different kind of Bot for every contest (so you're not stuck with a Bot type if you didn't like it your first game), but it is best to stick with one class of Bots if you want your character to become proficient in that area.

There are six areas of Pilot skills, and you are given 15 initial attribute points to assign to these abilities. Later on, as you earn Experience

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Points, you can spend 50 points to raise an ability by 1 attribute point. The areas are:

***Intelligence:** The capability to learn from experience. The equivalent of these points are added to your Experience Points each turn regardless of how good or bad your turn is. So, if your Intelligence is 4, you automatically get 4 points per turn as long as your Bot survives the contest.

***Constitution:** How well you deal with being hurt. This number establishes your Hit Points (i.e. Health) at the start of each game. This usually doesn't come into play unless your Bot gets hit in the Head or your Bot begins to overheat from taking too much damage, which in turn injures the Pilot. Each injury takes away one Hit Point.

***Intuition:** Ability to second-guess someone. It increases your Bot's chance of hitting targets and decreases the chance your enemy will hit your Bot.

***Precision:** Takes into account how well you can aim at someone. Also reduces your Bot's chances of stumbling or falling.

***Reflexes:** This is how well you can dodge things fired at you. It also helps decrease your Bot's odds of falling down.

***Luck:** Exactly what it says. The role of chance.

Every Pilot begins as a Cadet and can increase their rank by expending 200 experience points. Right now the game features one General, which is the highest attained rank to date. As of this writing, I have one Major, one Captain, four Lieutenants, and the rest are Cadets — and I've been in for three years. I know of some people who have been in longer who are still Cadets, because they've invested entirely in attributes.

You can also choose the gender of your Pilot, a fairly recent addition

to the game (within the last couple of years).

However, your character's gender has no effect on your abilities.

Selecting Your Bot

There are 11 different Bot Types to choose from in three class distinctions (Heavy, Medium and Light), each with their own strengths and weaknesses. I have played every type at least once, except the Incinerator and Cutter. Each Bot has a different mix of weapon types, from long-range Missile packs to Battle Fists and Blades for close combat. There is also a group of medium-range weapons, including: Lasers, Machine Guns, and the Particle Beam Cannon (used to raise the Heat Level inside an enemy Bot; more on this later).

Heavy Bots include the Cyclops, Titan and Devastator. These Bots are big and bulky, but the additional armor means that they're harder to knock out. Every type has a good mix

of weaponry, and all Heavy Bots are equipped with a Missile pack. The Titan comes with a Fist/Blade combination, the Cyclops only has a Fist, and the Devastator has neither.

Medium Bots are the Avenger, Incinerator, Mauler, and Ravager. All of these are distinct and are only grouped together as a class because of their comparable Engine tonnage. The Avenger is the most well-rounded Bot, with a Missile Pack in the Right Arm — no other Bot has this weapon in that location. The Incinerator is a "walking flame thrower," good for driving up the Heat inside enemy Bots. The Mauler has Battle Fists on *both* arms and is designed to work best in one-to-one situations. And the Ravager's advantage (but biggest weakness, I believe) is that it has excellent long-range weapons but no close-range capability.

Light Bots consist of the Gnat, Hornet, Cutter, and Reaver. Speed is their distinct advantage, particularly

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with the 30-ton Gnat. All have one close-range weapon (Fist or Blade), and a Missile pack, so the variety here involves Engine tonnage and subtle differences in weapons. The Hornet is rounded out with various lasers, the Reaver and Cutter offer a Cannon and Laser (it's their close-range weapons that differ), and the Gnat offers a Light Flame Cannon. The downside: it's easy to blow the thin armor off of these types once they get hit, and Light Bots are slowed so much once they are damaged that they become a serious liability.

For the first time player, I tend to recommend Bots with weapons that work in all range areas. So my suggestion is go with a Titan if you're cautious and a Hornet if you're gutsy. The Avenger is well-rounded if you insist on a Medium Bot, but it's so new I'm hesitant to immediately recommend it.

What Kind of Arena?

There are three possible types of Arenas to participate in. The most popular seem to be 2-sided contests, where two teams of nine Bots apiece square off. Another option is 4-sided games, where each team has three Bots each. The last is the yearly championship tournament, also known as the Free-For-All.

Two-sided contests are best if you're looking to have a lot of interaction with other players and mainly fight Bot-On-Bot battles. The downside is that it can be hard to communicate with up to eight other people (if no-one on the team is running more than one Pilot). CP attacks happen but are usually not a priority.

Four-sided games tend to lean more toward destroying CPs as the primary agenda, but they have their share of Bot fights too; since there are less team members, the chances for diplomacy are lessened, but it's easier to coordinate with less people. There have been cases where two teams temporarily ally to drive out a mutual enemy team and then try to waste each other, but this is not common.

The Free-For-All is just like it sounds — a bunch of Bots are thrown in an Arena together and battle it out against one another to see who's the "Best of the Arenas." Credit toward game play is awarded to the top three Pilots at the end of the contest. Sometimes players make

alliances to gang up and drive others out early, like the 4-sided games, but they rarely last. My experiences (and I've been in two championship tournaments) is that you NEVER know who to trust besides yourself.

Two-sided and Four-sided games can also be played at a variety of speeds (i.e. days between turns). The most common is Standard Pace, which averages 18 days between turns, taking mailing time into account. Fast paced games average 14 days and Slow paced ones average 24 days between turns.

The Basic Turn

Each turn consists of five phases where players make decisions based on what they think their opponents will do.

A phase includes a move and an attack portion. Moves include physically relocating to a new sector (including the ability for diagonal movement), facing specific opponents or directions, and special orders like Kneel Down or Eject — which is how to get out of a damaged Bot before you die in it. Attacks are either directed to specific Bots (except your teammates; you can't shoot them) or to the Command Post, though there is a Self Destruct option if you wish to commit harikari.

All that is required is that you enter the number for a desired action in the appropriate space on the turn-sheet and mail it back to AGE on time.

Action Points and Heat

Action Points (APs) represent the power of the internal systems of the Bot. APs are added at the start of each turn, based on the amount of undamaged Engine tonnage and the weight class of the Bot. Since heavier Bots have fewer APs per engine, this means that Light Bots start out with more points — which is why they are so fast and hard to hit. APs are used to decide the order of movement and attacks for a given phase of a turn. Also, APs can help a Bot dodge attacks more effectively or keep from falling (in addition to attributes).

Heat is actually the biggest obstacle Bot Pilots face. Every action a Bot performs creates an amount of thermal radiation that builds up — if the build-up is excessive, it causes various systems to fail or can cause

harm to your Pilot. Larger Bots have Cooling Units to help offset Heat problems, because they tend to heat up faster due to their size. Regular turn-to-turn action does not generate problems, but when compounded by attacks from enemy bots (which also increases Heat), it can become hazardous. Incinerators are designed expressly to achieve this goal.

I would like to stress that a lack of action points or excessive heat does not cause a Bot to quit operating entirely.

Keeping Score

In CTF 2187, a team's progress is mapped by a Victory Rating compiled by taking the points earned by a team's hits on enemy targets and dividing that by the total Bot tonnage of the team. Individual Victory Ratings are compiled the same way, using the Pilot's Victory Points divided by the specific Bot's tonnage. Awards are given at the end of each game for the Team and Individual with the highest ratings, and these wins are recorded as part of a Pilot's track record. Also, an individual Bot's damage can be tracked via the Damage Rating, which is computed by taking the total Damage Points and dividing by the Bot's tonnage.

Two other awards are possible. CP Kills are awarded when an individual Bot destroys a Command Post. Bot Kills are given to individuals who fire the final shot that destroys a Bot (with the Pilot still inside).

Closing Comments

CTF 2187 costs a (what I feel) reasonable \$3.50 per Pilot per turn. A monthly newsletter — called **The Command Post**, keeps you up-to-date on all active Arenas, game changes, and contains entertaining commentary between players at no extra cost. You have the option to FAX in turns, and also can fill out Standing Orders (a default set of instructions in case yours are lost in the mail).

Most importantly, though, AGE's customer service is excellent. Any time you have a question, they're more than willing to help out. If they have to alter your turn (usually because they can't read your writing; happens to me a lot), they send a photocopy of your turn with the change and inform you of it. Also,

they're constantly looking for feedback from players for ways to make CTF 2187 even better. The company has been around for eight years and appears to have an excellent track record.

If you're interested in **CTF 2187**, contact: Advanced Gaming Enterprises, PO Box 214949, Sacramento, CA 95821-0949.

The Art of World War

A PBM Review

Reviewed by Gregory P. Benage

Introduction

World War IV is a closed-ended, strategic simulation of a global conflict between 40 nations emerging from the political, economic and military collapse occasioned by the Third World War. As a player in **WWIV**, you will guide the military, economic and political activities of one of these nations as you struggle to build a new world Superpower.

Setting

The "futuristic" setting of **WWIV** will probably be new to the traditional wargamer. Most of the PBM games devoted to modern warfare either simulate an historical conflict (such as Victory!) or they are set in an abstracted or randomly generated geopolitical context (such as the World Conquest game). The "futuristic" setting of **WWIV** makes possible an interesting alternative. On the one hand, the political boundaries we are familiar with have been redrawn such that the strategic potential of each player-nation is roughly equal.

On the other, the game map represents our own dear planet with its long history of warfare, and the veteran wargamer will discover many strategic situations with which he or she is familiar. Players can salivate over the abundant oilfields of the Middle East or find themselves dodging German submarines as they struggle to deploy forces to Europe from across the Atlantic.

The consequence of this setting is a very playable synthesis of a "level playing field" and a familiar historical and geographical context. I have spoken with many PBM gamers and board wargamers who are less than enthusiastic about a PBM game position that seems little more than an

anonymous collection of "population centers" and terrain-types.

Likewise, I know of a few gamers (myself included) who become a little frustrated when their Switzerland position offers the Germans no more than a couple turns of amusement. That the setting of WWIV neatly avoids these frustrations is probably reason enough for the strategic wargame enthusiast to give the game a close look.

Game Map and Rulebook

The game map is laid out in the conventional "hex grid" format and depicts each player-nation as well as the many "neutral" hexes that have yet to be reorganized into a coherent political entity. Hexes that produce "economic credits" (ECs) and/or strategic resources include graphic representations of that production (e.g. an "oil drum" to designate oil production). The strategic resources include food, minerals, iron, oil, precious metals and uranium.

Their placement on the map is generally reflective of their current distribution. Some attention is given to game balance in this distribution, but not overly much. Regional pro-

ductive strengths and weaknesses are necessary to create a reasonably complex strategic context, and WWIV stays true to this principle. For example, the Saudi Arabia position enjoys a significant advantage in oil production over most other positions.

However, the Saudi player will also have a difficult time convincing "oil-poor" neighbors like India to stay away from his oilfields....

One notable exclusion from the game is terrain. Each hex in WWIV represents approximately 300 square miles, and terrain effects on movement and combat have been omitted (with the exception of sea hexes, canals and straits). While terrain could certainly introduce interesting strategic challenges, it would add the "number complexity" to the game that the designer generally tried to avoid. The designer wanted a fast-paced "grand strategy" wargame that allowed for a great deal of strategic complexity without the number-crunching tasks that make these games tedious for some players.

The quality of the map is fair. It is printed in black-and-white on heavy paper and separated into three sections: North/South America, Europe/Middle East/Africa and

Asia/Australia. A color map, of course, would have made for a more visually pleasing product. Further, the durability of the maps after repeated use leaves something to be desired. On the positive side, when you do inevitably spill coffee on your map, it won't cost you \$10 for a replacement. In general, if you think "function" is more important than "glitz" in a game map, you will be satisfied with the WWIV product.

The rulebook more or less reflects the design priorities of the game map. It is printed in black-and-white and boasts a neat-looking "hover-tank" on the cardstock cover. Inside, you'll find little more than a few photocopied line-drawings of military units and very concisely written and easy-to-reference rules. Gamers looking for eloquent prose and elegant illustrations will be disappointed. Again, the designer simply felt these things were less important to wargamers than clearly written rules, and I suspect he is right.

Economics and Technology

The acquisition of EC income and strategic resources is, of course, crucial to the success of a nation. For

one thing, the Third World War knocked each nation's technology base back to a roughly 1930s level. It will be the ongoing task of each player to recover the lost military technology that supported world Superpowers. Military technology in WWIV is divided into five categories: Infantry, Vehicle, Aerospace, Naval and Nuclear. Each nation begins the game with a tech level of 1 in each of these areas. At TL-1 in Infantry, for example, your nation can produce basic Combat Infantry, Engineer and Field Artillery units. TL-1 in Vehicle allows the construction of Horse Cavalry (remember Poland in 1939?) and Motorized Infantry, while this tech level in Aerospace is sufficient to build Fighter and Bomber units.

Naval TL-1 permits the construction of Transport and Destroyer units, while nothing can be built with Nuclear TL-1.

The combat capabilities of the units your nation can produce will depend upon your nation's technology level in that area. For example, the combat capability of a Jet Fighter unit available at Aerospace TL-20 is roughly 2.5 times that of a TL-1 Fighter, and its effective range is extended by 25%. As tech levels continue to 100 in each area, it is easy to predict the advantages of a technologically advanced military.

The recovery of this crucial technology costs money—a player should expect that technology investment and unit maintenance will represent at least one-half to one-third of his or her nation's EC income. The more income your nation acquires, the more quickly you can build a technological advantage over you opponents.

These technological elements contribute greatly to WWIV. Detailed rules for tech recovery are more common in science fiction PBMs than strategic wargames. In World Conquest, for example, there is a random chance of getting a "technological advancement" from turn to turn, and in Victory!, new units become available as game time progresses. In neither of these game systems is technology really presented as a strategic challenge for players to explore.

WWIV introduces military technology directly into the strategic simulation. Players will have to determine which areas of technology are most crucial to their positions and what balance of tech recovery and new unit

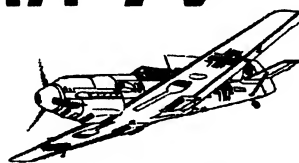
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WW IV is also moderated by High Point Games

production is suited for their strategic situation. Tech recovery also adds to the sense of satisfaction a successful player gets as he watches his empire grow.

Instead of simply accumulating more and more ECs, resources and military units (which are all nice, of course), a player can direct and enjoy the continuing modernization of his armed forces. Having experienced this aspect of the game, I have a hard time returning to the established "force pools" of other games.

Of course, the construction of military units also requires an expenditure of ECs and resources. At TL-1, this can range from 1 Food and 2 ECs for a Combat Infantry unit to 1 Mineral, 2 Iron, 1 Oil, 1 Precious Metal and 5 ECs for a Destroyer. The resource requirements for various units tend to fluctuate depending on the unit's tech level. As a general rule, low-tech units are iron and oil intensive while high-tech units depend more upon minerals, precious metals and uranium.

While players can meet some of their economic requirements through buy and sell actions or private trade with other player-nations, this need for EC income and strategic resources is what drives military expansion in the game. Each player will typically acquire the available neutral hexes in his or her region, but inevitably, continued expansion will require the annexation of another player's territory. This happens in some areas sooner than others. In Continental Europe, for example, France, Germany, Poland and the Ukraine are packed tightly together and in competition for the neutral hexes of southern Europe.

Throw in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, Russia, Turkey, Egypt and Algeria all surrounding the Continent, and you've got a formula for pretty immediate conflict. By contrast, nations like Alaska and South Africa have a bit more elbow room between them and their closest neighbors. Regardless, by Turn 3, most of the player-nations are involved in at least limited engagements.

Combat

The fast pace of the game is certainly one of its strengths and greatly adds to the "anticipation factor" of the game. Players will not find themselves taking several turns to build up and deploy their forces and several

more to see the results of a combat. As Germany in a current game, I built Light Tanks and Fighter/Bombers on Turn 2 and invaded both France and Poland on Turn 3 (with the help of my British and Ukrainian allies!).

By Turn 4, I was executing Combat Air Patrols over Paris and capturing Danzig. By Turn 5, I had Light Tanks in the streets of Paris and controlled half of Poland. An aggressive player won't receive a turn without combat reports after Turn 2 (and cautious players may not either, if they have aggressive neighbors...).

The game's combat mechanics are fairly traditional and tend to contribute to the quick resolution of battles and the fast pace of the game. When two or more non-allied units encounter each other, they automatically engage. Each unit has both an Attack and Defense Factor; the total Attack Factors of each "stack" is compared with the total Defense Factors of the enemy "stack" and a force ratio is determined for both stacks. Each unit is then checked for damaged, disrupted, retreat, surrender, captured and destroyed results dependent upon the force ratio and unit category. All combats are considered to be simultaneous exchanges, so even if your units are badly outgunned, they will at least get off a shot.

Of course, combat odds become a bit more murky once nuclear capability is introduced. A 10 kiloton warhead is available at Nuclear TL-10 (2-4 turns of investment).

As one might expect, nukes don't play by the same rules as conventional units! Each warhead has a simple "kill chance" that represents the percentage chance of a "destroyed" result for each enemy unit in the hex to which it is delivered. For example, if a stack is hit by a 10 kiloton nuke, each unit in the stack will have a 45% chance of being destroyed. Further, large warheads can irradiate a hex and suspend its production of ECs and resources for a number of turns.

For a hex targeted by a 100Kt "tactical" warhead, this effect lasts only 1 turn, while a hex hit by a 100Mt "strategic" warhead will be irradiated for 7 turns!

The introduction of nuclear weapons presents a host of strategic problems with which a player must grapple. Early in the game, air superiority is crucial, both offensively and defensively. The only way to deliver nuclear warheads in a game's initial stages is with Bomber units. You will need Fighters to control the skies, both to effectively deliver nuclear war-

heads and protect your ground forces from them.

However, by Turn 5 or 6, a player can begin to run into nuclear-capable Heavy Artillery. This unit's limited movement capability restricts its role, for the most part, to defense—but it's extremely effective in that role! By Turn 10, nuclear capable self-propelled artillery units are available that can be used offensively as well.

This is also about the time that the first intermediate range missile bases will be deployed, and the only defense against missile attacks is an Anti-Ballistic Missile base that will not be available for several turns after the initial appearance of IRBMs. Even then, the ABM base is a base—it can't move, and while it can effectively protect your industrial centers, it won't be much help for your armies in the field.

The result is that "massed firepower" tends to be discouraged—especially large fleets. Ground units can generally be deployed along a fairly wide front, but fleets cannot. Your transports, motherships and carriers are going to need a warship escort, so any invasion fleet is going to involve a concentration of very expensive units in one hex. In this kind of situation, nukes can be devastating.

Carriers can provide some protection from nuclear strikes by aircraft, but your fleets will have no protection from ballistic missile strikes until you can produce Aegis Frigates or space-based defenses, and that kind of technology takes many turns to acquire. Even these units do not provide protection from the surface-to-surface, guided and advanced submarine missile attack capabilities that are available at the Aegis and space units' technology level. These factors seriously limit the effectiveness of fleets in the game. But such is the challenge of a strategic context characterized by rampant nuclear proliferation!

Moreover, it is often possible to do without large fleets. Factories are required to build units in **WWIV**—one Factory per unit constructed each turn. The success of an overseas campaign will depend not on naval fleets, but upon effectively securing factories in the theater of operations. There are a couple ways to do this.

One is to capture the needed factories from your enemy. Because the first available airborne unit has a range of ten hexes, these units often play a critical role in the capturing of overseas factories. This is typically accomplished through a nuclear strike to knock out air defenses and "soften"

the target, followed by a massive "Market Garden" airdrop of several paratrooper divisions. The problem with this strategy is that the nukes tend to knock out the hex's factories as well as its defenses.

Nevertheless, if even one factory survives the attack, new ones can be constructed in the hex the following turn—though at considerable expense.

This strategy is most effective in the early to mid-stages of the game, when there are still relatively weak positions around. As the game progresses, and these positions are absorbed by stronger ones, it becomes more difficult to find an industrial target that doesn't have prohibitive air and missile defenses. Without the preliminary nuclear strikes, you can expect your airdrops to be about as successful as they were in Holland! At this stage, the most common strategy is to deploy Engineer units to the theater to build factories and bases. Once this is accomplished, units can be built in the theater rather than transported from elsewhere.

Some players have expressed dissatisfaction with the "realism" of these "forward factories." A Mechanized Engineer unit unloaded from a transport in the Bering Strait can move across East Asia into central Siberia and industrialize a hex there in one turn. This kind of situation is somewhat characteristic of **WWIV**'s economic mechanics.

There is some representation of supply for military units in the game, though it is quite abstract. Units which receive a "retreat" result in combat but are not adjacent to any other controlled hex will receive a "surrender" result instead. Thus, encirclements that significantly shift combat odds are possible. Further, a string of civilized or controlled hexes between the origin and destination hexes of strategic redeployments is necessary. This at least abstractly simulates the need for supply lines to reinforce armies in the field.

Even these sorts of abstract supply considerations are not extended to the economic aspects of the game, however. In the previous example, though military units could not be strategically redeployed from the coast to the hex in central Siberia, it is not a problem to transport the resources, machinery and labor necessary to industrialize the hex.

Similarly, a player can drop an Airborne Infantry unit 10 hexes (or about 3000 miles) away from an Airbase in his home country. This unit

would receive the "supply" penalty to retreats if attacked by enemy ground forces (because it is surrounded by uncontrolled hexes), but it is perfectly capable of arranging for the transport of the hex's resources and EC income back to the homeland.

The result of these idiosyncrasies is that veteran WWIV players generally expect the strategies they suggest and plan to counter them, whereas new players simply may not consider the possibility that hordes of unsupported airborne might be dropped on them. I am convinced the "airborne horde" strategy only remains popular because some veterans have had success with it against "newbies."

The "forward factory" strategy can be countered. My British allies recently tried to sneak a boatload of Engineers into North America and found nuclear artillery waiting for them. He wasted around four turns getting the Engineers across the Atlantic and has nothing to show for it. Defending this strategy generally requires good intelligence: Keep an eye (or spy plane, satellite, etc..) on your backdoor and be ready to pound any pesky Engineers that try to set up shop there. At the mid-range tech levels, Rangers are very effective in this role. Because these units do not require maintenance, you can string them out across your vulnerable areas and forget about them. They'll be happy to let you know if any unwanted construction workers show up on your shores!

Espionage, Diplomacy and Propaganda

To this point, the discussion has been dominated entirely by the military and economic aspects of the game. This bias is intended, as these aspects dominate play of the game. A player in WWIV can also, however, execute espionage activities against an adversary (or ally!).

There are 11 different missions available to a player that include reconnaissance, sabotage, destabilization and infiltration missions.

Though successful covert operations are typically expensive, they can tip the balance at a crucial moment when coordinated with military operations. As one example (which might appease the naval enthusiasts), an amphibious invasion which would otherwise end in nuclear fire might be saved by identifying a well-placed missile base and sabotaging the nuclear warheads deployed to that base. Indeed, the player might find that his opponent was depending upon the nukes to protect his coastline, and that once this threat was neutralized, there was precious little resistance to be found elsewhere.

WWIV will also require substantial diplomatic efforts of its players. Limited game diplomacy can be executed through the World Press, a collection of "press releases" issued by each player and included with the turn report. Some players invent political and military leaders, give their units

individual names and designations and recount these units' exploits, etc.

Frequently, the World Press is a forum for expressing one's irritation with an adversary or gloating over one's victories.... The World Press is a fine instrument for role-playing/propaganda, but it won't be sufficient for the extensive diplomacy a successful WWIV campaign requires. Alliances are critical in the game.

The simple fact is, a solitary nation doesn't stand a chance against a strong and well-coordinated multi-player alliance. This was not, originally, the designer's intention. He had hoped to put together a game in which a solid player could go it alone. I feel it is one of the game's strengths, however. I don't think you've really gotten the "PBM experience" unless you've met a horde of gamers from across the country (and world!). I suspect I'll remember the Eurasian-African Treaty for Military Expansion as fondly as my own German Reich. Still, if you dislike player diplomacy (I assume we all dislike the phone bills), this is probably not your game.

Final Thoughts

As a strategic simulation of modern global conflict which encompasses military, economic, political and technological elements while blending playability with real-world "flavor," World War IV stands alone. The rules are well-written and easy to learn, but

the game presents the player with enough strategic choices and subtleties to keep veterans near the mailbox. The game is a "must see" for strategic wargaming enthusiasts. Its "anticipation factor" and fast-paced action beat any PBM—of any genre—I have played.

The current computer program is bug-free, and the moderators offer reliable two- and three-week turn-arounds. An information management program is available which handles the game's book-keeping and number-crunching tasks and assists in the submission of turns by e-mail.

Currently, some games of WWIV allow players to receive their turns by e-mail, at no extra charge. Games in the US are presently being offered through JFH Games, High Point Games and Rolling Thunder Games; I have played with the first two but not the last.

For more information, contact: JFH Games, 4251 Hatcher Ave, Baton Rouge LA 70806.

High Point Games, 2142 Terrimill Terrace, Chesterfield MO 63017-7518,

Rolling Thunder Games, PO Box 1240, Broomfield CO 80038-1240 BBS: (303) 466-8681

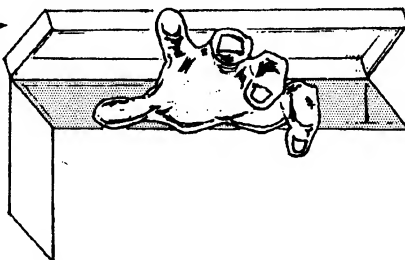
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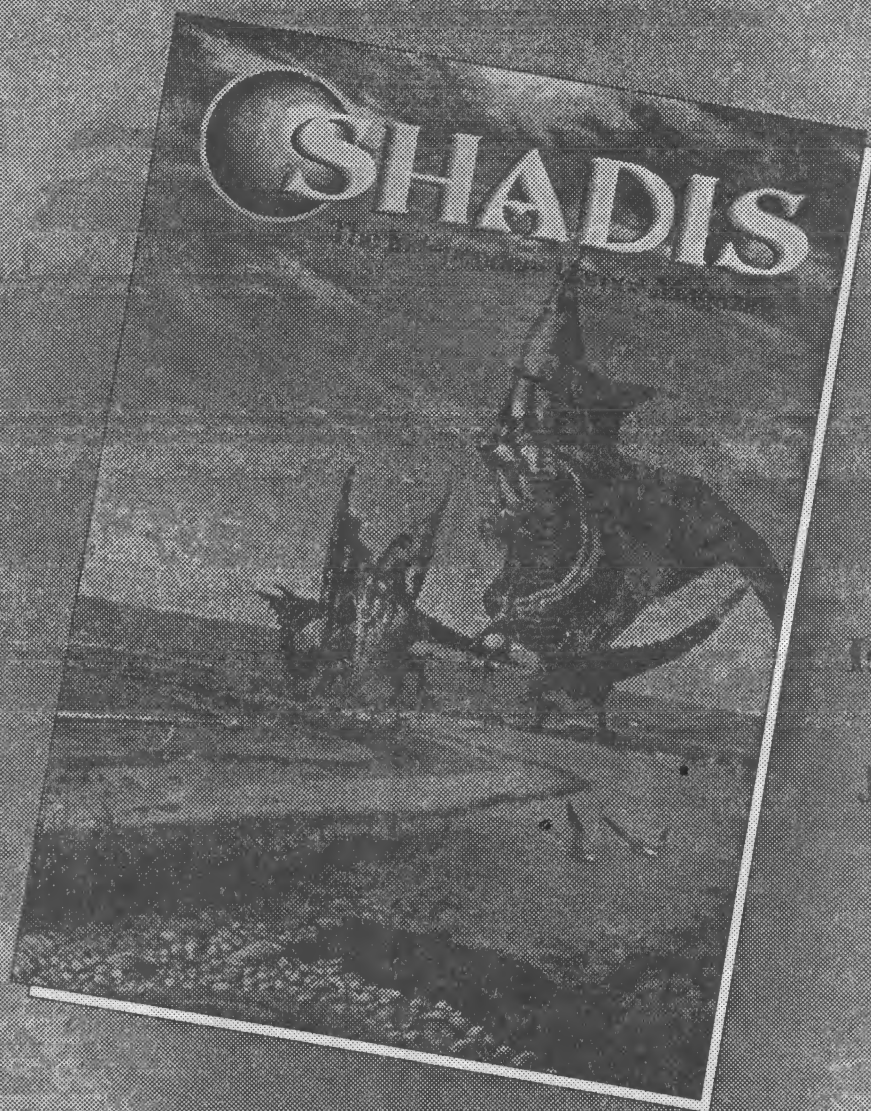
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The Market Platz is a meeting place where readers pass along information, barter, trade and gossip. Readers are invited to place classified ads, announce group meetings, seek out other players, etc.

Subscribers may place classified ads free of charge with a limit of one ad per issue and a maximum of twenty-five words. Non-subscribers can place ads for 25¢ per word with a limit of twenty-five words.

Convention announcements, group meetings and public service notices can be placed free of charge.

Ads will be placed on a first-come-first-served basis, with subscribers having priority.

Classifieds

Marlboro Queen,
Looking forward to Pigeon Forge
in December. Let it snow, let it
snow let it snow!! I got dubs on the
jacuzzi.

The Jack and Coke Kid

Amber,
Hope you and mom enjoyed the
games. Heard the cast came off
- finally!! See you soon - save all
your knock knock jokes for me.
Daddy

Toni,
I'll go whale watching with you
anytime! Luv ya!
Quick Draw

Miniature Painting Service

For prices send long SASE to
Leslie A. King
c/o Fortress Figures, Inc.
P.O. Box 66
Jonesboro, IN 46938

WANTED

Looking for a copy of the board
game, Frontier Six and/or infor-
mation on how to contact the
designer or whoever holds the
rights to it.
The game came out in the early
80's

Contact Editor

Want to publish your own games?
Find answers to your questions in
this booklet; **The Facts About
RPG Publishing**. Send check for
\$10 to Storm Press, POB 266,
Arl Hts. IL 6006-0266

LOST AND FOUND

Found: Box of rare, signed
magic cards at ORIGINS.
Describe contents of the box
and the vehicle you were driving
and they're yours.

Found: One nifty camera left at
our booth at DRAGON CON.
Call soon or we will develop the
film and make fun of your pic-
tures.

Contact Editor.

WANTED

Reviewers, writers & artists.
Send SASE for Writers' and
Artists' Guidelines to SHADIS,
17880 Graystone Ave. #203,
Chino Hills CA 91709.

HELP WANTED

SHADIS is looking for corre-
spondents/editors to head up
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ing Conventions and PBM.

Send a sample of your writing
and background experience to the
editor.

Also looking for unique articles
and material that is off the beaten
path. If you feel you have an idea
for an article or series that would
be of interest to gamers, we want
to hear about it.

What's Wrong with this Picture?

Beautiful woman sitting home
alone eating microwaved pop-
tarts and watching Roseanne
reruns on her B&W tv.
Call me Roxy.

Pogo

In Memory of Frank Townsend

Your empty chair is a constant
reminder of the loss we have
suffered, Frank. It's just not the
same with out your occasional
wise crack and hearty laughter.
We keep expecting you to walk
through the door and take your
place - another of your practical
jokes. We miss you Frank.

Your friends.

Bluto, smacking yourself in the
head with a 2x4 a half dozen
times does nothing but make
your head bleed.

Julie

May We Have Your Attention Please?



We are looking for
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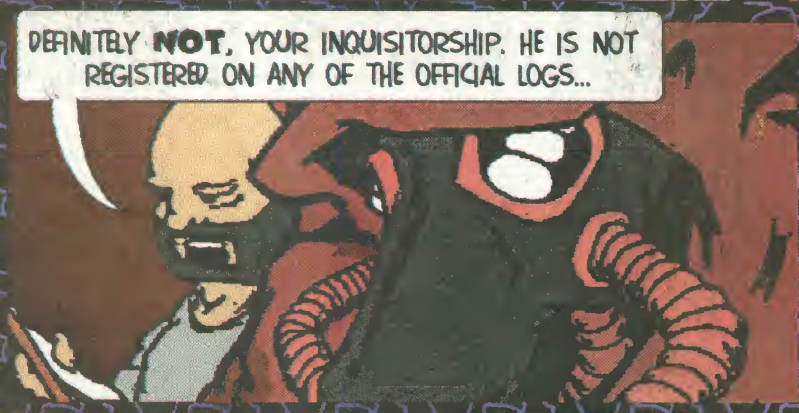
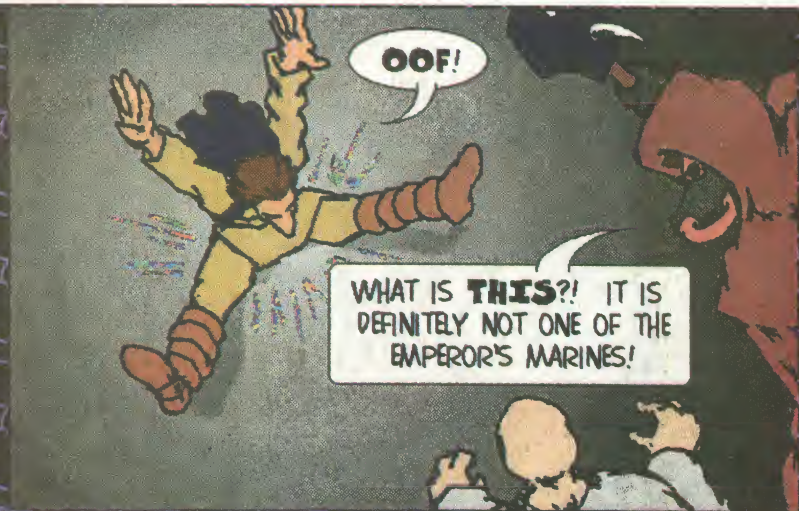
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After pushing a button on a mysterious device, Finieous Fingers finds himself hurtling through space and time...



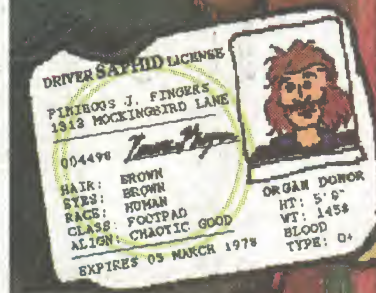
UGH - EVEN TO LOOK UPON IT OFFENDS THE SENSIBILITIES OF THE SPACE EMPEROR...

NOW DON'T GET YOUR HOSES IN A KNOT - I'M JUST AS HUMAN AS Y-- WELL, ANYWAY, I'VE GOT SOME **ID**.



WHAT ABERRATION IS THIS?! YOU PROUDLY PROCLAIM YOUR ALIGNMENT WITH THE CHAOTIC FORCES! **GUARDS! SEIZE IT!**

UH, THAT'S "CHAOTIC **GOOD**" "CHAOTIC **GOOD**!" (UH-OH)



One body cavity search later...

GET IN THERE, CHAOTIC SPAWN!

THAT'S CHAOTIC **GUUNH!**



CRIPES! THESE HOBBITS - THEY'RE **VAMPIRES!** I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

ALL RIGHT, YA DIRTY SCREWS! I'M NOT AFRAID OF A BUNCH OF GOONS IN MOON BOOTS! YOU WON'T BREAK **FINEOUS FINGERS!**



YOU **FOOLS!** HE'S GETTING AWAY! **AFTER HIM!**



ooh... "after him", he says...

Elsewhere —in the Elemental Temple...



YES, MY HOBBIT BRETHREN -- DESTROY THE HUMAN! **ATTACK!**



UH-OH...

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NO SIR, I HAVE NO IDEA ...

YOU SAW THE MONSTER AGAIN, MA'AM? YES MA'AM, LARGE WINGS ...

NO FRANK, THAT WON'T FLY!

AS HE WALKS TO BLACKBURN'S OFFICE, HE THINKS ABOUT HIS PEOPLE. THEY NEVER MISS. HE TAKES A DEEP BREATH. HE DOES ENJOY HIS WORK.

CAPTAIN BLACKBURN




MR. BLACKBURN, I'M GOING TO NEED ACCESS INTO ONE OF YOUR PEOPLE'S DESKS AND FILES, SECTION THIRTY-NINE; PARAGRAPH TEN OF THE UNITED WORLD POWER SYSTEMS AND SECURITY HANDBOOK GIVES ME THAT POWER.



YES, I KNOW. BE FAST ABOUT IT THEN, AND DON'T DISTURB ANYONE'S WORK. WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT ANYWAY?

I REALLY DON'T HAVE TO
INFORM YOU OF THAT,
CAPTAIN. NOW IF
YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.

BLACKBURN

EXCUSE ME.
WHICH ONE OF
THESE DESKS
BELONGS TO
JOANN DANNIS?

UMMM...
OVER NEAR THE
CORNER.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE
THIS TIME, JOANN?

NOW TO SEE WHAT
THE LATE
DETECTIVE DANNIS HAS
ON US.

HMMM ... COULD SHE
HAVE HAD ANOTHER DISK?
NO, SHE'D HAVE USED IT
BY NOW. TOO BAD. DANNIS IS
PART OF THE BOTTOM
SCUM BY NOW.



THE DARKNESS CAN BE A COMFORT, ONCE
YOU GET USED TO IT. WE ARE
SURROUNDED BY IT JUST BEFORE BIRTH,
SAFE WITHIN OUR MOTHER'S
WOMB. WHEN YOU GET OLDER, AND
THAT SAME DARKNESS COMES TO
RECLAIM YOU, IT'S NOT SO BAD.



THEN AGAIN, WHEN IT COMES FOR
THE YOUNG, MOST GO KICKING AND
SCREAMING. YOU DON'T WANT TO
GO, BUT SOMETIMES IT HAPPENS
THAT YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.





GLAD YOU'RE BACK WITH US
JO. THE DOORS ARE WEDGED
IN, AND THE EMERGENCY
RELEASE IS OUT, SO WE'RE
MAKING A DOOR.

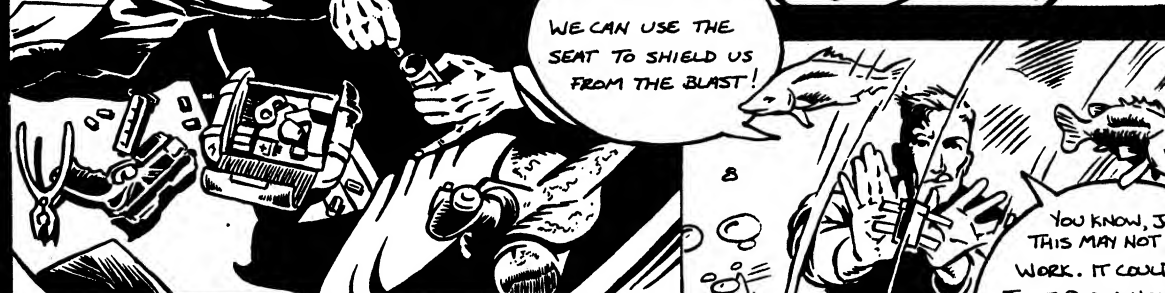
DAMN GARY, WE CAN'T
DIE HERE! NOT BY THAT
CREEP'S ORDER! I WANT
HIM... I WANT HIM BAD!

HANG TIGHT BOSS... WE'RE
ABOUT READY FOR A SWIM. I HAD
TO USE MOST OF THE BULLETS
WE HAD WITH US, THOUGH.



COME ON!!

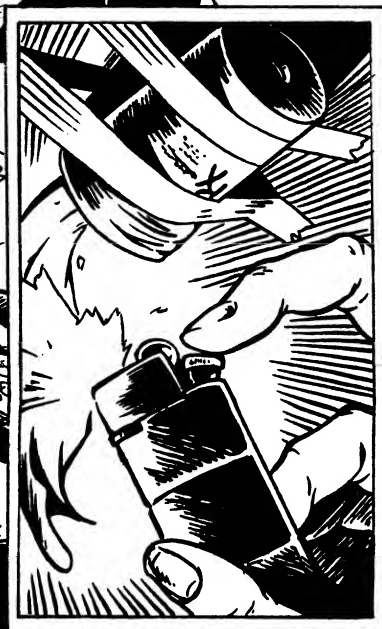
WE CAN USE THE
SEAT TO SHIELD US
FROM THE BLAST!



YOU KNOW, JO,
THIS MAY NOT EVEN
WORK. IT COULD
JUST POP A HOLE
IN THE GLASS AND
DROWN US.



OH GRAND!
NOW YOU
TELL ME!!



THE ADVENTURES OF JOE GENERO™ THE AVERAGE MAN

This month's hair-raising happenstance:

JOE JUST STANDS THERE!

An Average Thanks to John Nowak for this idea.



A Lot Can Happen in a Minute

In *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, when surprised, Joe has a 30% of being unable to do anything for a *full minute*.

WAIT, WAIT —
GIVE ME A MINUTE
TO GET MY HEAD
TOGETHER, OKAY?



"Help me, Spock!"

In *Prime Directive*, every round Joe has a 25% of standing still and doing nothing but defending with a penalty.

NOTE TO MYSELF:
DON'T PLAY IN GAMES
WITH DISINTEGRATING
WEAPONS...



Hurry Up and Wait

If Joe is a UNE Private in *Legion of Steel*, he is not allowed to dodge enemy fire unless specifically ordered to by a superior officer.

"BE ALL THAT YOU
CAN BE", THE RECRUITER
SAID... I CAN'T **WAIT** TO
GET MY HANDS ON HIM



Who is Joe?

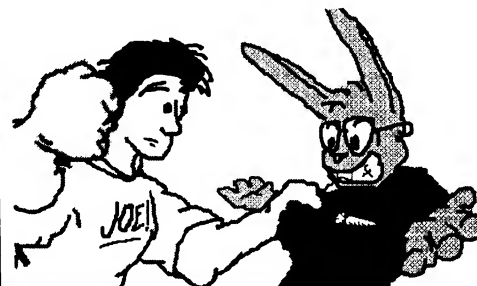
Joe is the "average" man. His attributes are average. His skills are average. His rolls are average.

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What chance does this every-day man have in a world of cybered technoid gothic magic-users? It all depends on the rules you use...

You Wouldn't Hit a Bunny with Glasses Now, Would You?

In *Albedo 2nd Edition*, Joe cannot attack someone in hand-to-hand combat unless he can make a "Coolness Under Fire" check — which is a 28% chance. (No roll is required at all to shoot somebody, though.)

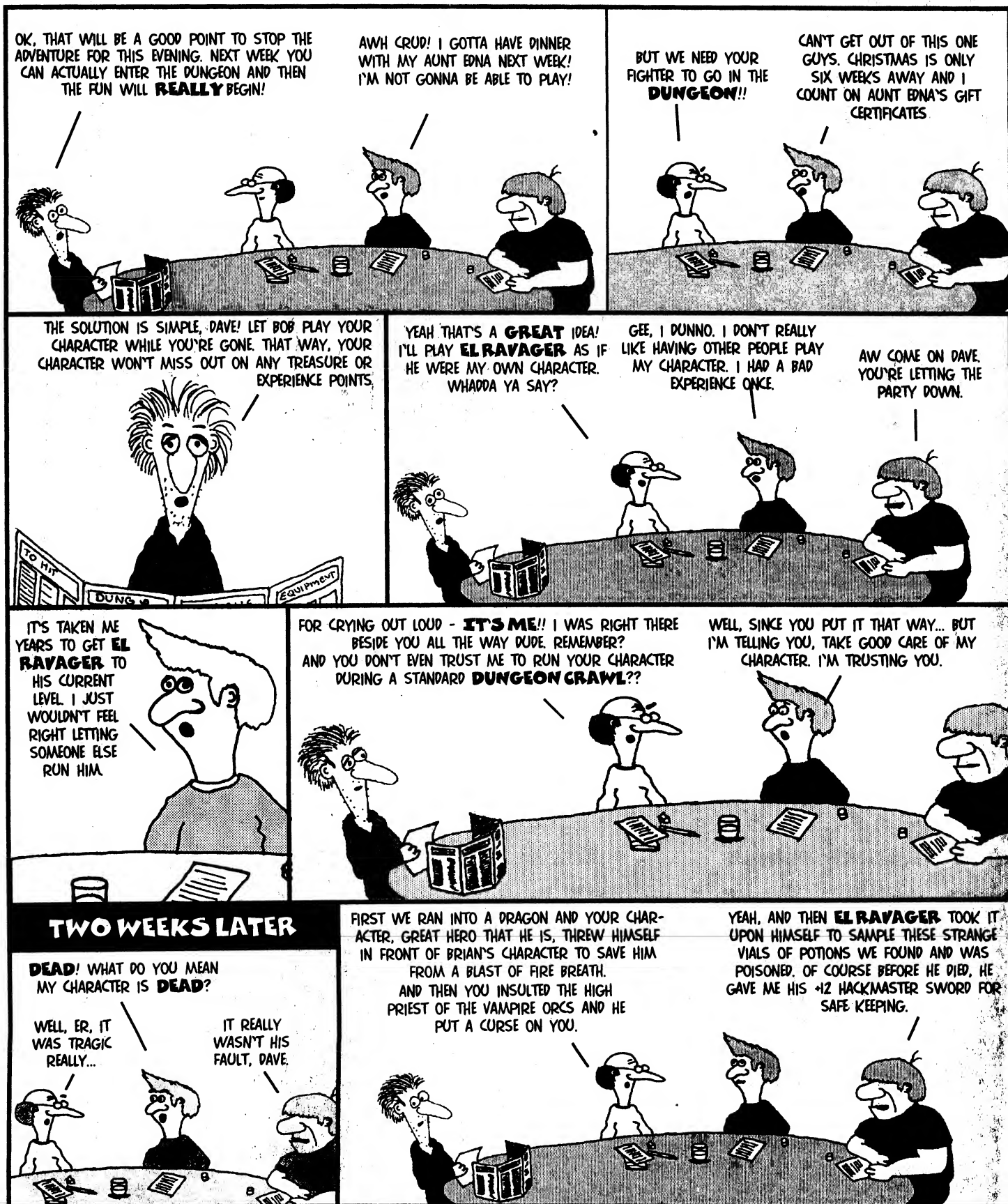


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Joe is tuned in and turned on...
JoeGenero1@aol.com
...E-mail him your Average Ideas.

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Legacy

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Fallen Empires



In the southern oceans of Dominia Prime lay a continent of great kingdoms. Far from the war between Urza and Mishra, the lands of Sarpadia prospered. But as the climate changed, resources dwindled and empires crumbled. Hideous new species arose in the forests and seas, forcing the Sarpadians to fight for their very survival; Icatian towns mustered Phalanxes to defend themselves from Orcish raiders and the misbegotten spawn of uncontrolled black magic. Recruit these toughened warriors and vicious predators for your *Magic: The Gathering* duels, but beware lest you fare no better than the *Fallen Empires*.

MAGIC
The Gathering

WIZARDS
of the
COAST

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